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STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS:

OR,

THE LIFE OF

P. T. BARNUM

VERILY the showman hath need of "spoof" as well as illusion. As in the famous picture of Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy, the showman walks between Spoof and Illusion, hand in hand with both.

(Kenneth Grahame, in his Introduction to the reissue of "Lord" George Sanger's "Seventy Years a Showman.")

IF the question had been asked during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, "Who is the typical American of this period?" a perspicacious observer might have replied, "Phineas T. Barnum." Barnum not only assumed that the people like to be fooled, — that was an ancient discovery, — but he also discovered the immense potentiality of advertising. And he demonstrated in his Great Moral Show that it made little difference what the object was — woolly horse, anacanda, or the elephant Jumbo — so long as it was effectively advertised.

(W. R. Thayer, in "The Life and Letters of John Hay," vol. ii.)



P. T. Barnum

From the steel engraving by E. Teel (after a daguerreotype by Root), used as the frontispiece to "The Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself" (1855).

STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS:

OR,

THE LIFE OF

P. T. BARNUM,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

GEORGE S. BRYAN.

ILLUSTRATED FROM CONTEMPORARY PRINTS.

VOLUME I



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NOTE

THE PRESENT EDITION is based upon "The Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself" (New York, 1855); the 1869 (Hartford) issue of "Struggles and Triumphs; or, Forty Years' Recollections of P. T. Barnum"; and the 1889 (Buffalo) issue of the condensed version of "Struggles and Triumphs." (A summary of the rather involved bibliographical history of the Barnum autobiography may be discovered in the Introduction.) Roughly speaking, the first has been used down to the meeting with Tom Thumb in 1842; the second, to the building of Waldemere, with which that volume closes; the third, to the conclusion of Barnum's story. The parts taken from these three have been joined to form a continuous narrative of greater compass than either of the first two and of greater fulness than any one of the three. This is supplemented by Mrs. Barnum's "The Last Chapter" (in the Appendix).

It became evident that to treat the Barnumian texts as classically sacrosanct would be inadvisable even if possible. A few transposals have been made; certain passages have been referred to the Appendix; certain others have been dropped as immaterial — and where the editor has not otherwise done so, the printer has marked their absence by a triangular little arrangement of full points. For readability's sake, the punctuation has been amended in a multitude of cases — instances either of typographical error, of archaic formal usage, or of

NOTE

Barnum's thronging idiosyncrasies. Numerous misspellings and other blunders of the author or of the slipshod press have been corrected. Such, however, is about the extent of editorial interference. Some inaccuracies have been pointed out and allowed to remain. Consistency of printing style, either between the originally differing texts or within the same text, originally inconsistent with itself, would have been a hopeless ideal; and one may think these pages not less agreeable for being thus seasoned with variety.

Unsigned footnotes are Barnum's. Those signed "Ed." are the editor's; and haply the reader may find them not without their occasion as adjuncts to the monster performance under the big top.

G. S. B.

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INTRODUCTION

PHINEAS T. BARNUM wielded the pen of a ready writer and delighted in authorship. Being a showman or an impresario was fun; yet long before a hundred and fifty concerts had been given, he was ready to end the engagement with Jenny Lind; from museum or circus he was often minded to retire to "tranquillity"; and in later years he did not care to travel with his show. Being a city-planner was fun; yet he complained that it meant encounters with old fogies and "mole-eyed land-owners," contacts with an ungrateful proletariat; it led to his involvement in the Jerome Clock company tangle; and before his one year was over as mayor of the town whose chief citizen and leading benefactor he easily was, he said: "Next April my term of office ends and no one can congratulate me on the event more heartily than I do myself. I shall not step down and out, but out and up to a showman's platform." Making money was fun; yet he was brought to reflect that "I had placed too much confidence in mere money and my own personal efforts; I was too much concerned in material prosperity." Philanthropy was fun — yet what about the persecution of impudent begging-letters?

But from his autobiography — from the writing of it, the altering of it, the bringing of it down to date — he won a joy that custom could not stale nor age wither. He told the story and retold it; expanded it and abridged it; shifted incidents and modified descriptions; inserted illustrations and removed them; changed the title and kept tinkering with the dedication. The book was got up with good paper, clear print, and wide margins; with narrow margins, poor paper, and diminished type. It was dressed in cloth of varying quality and divers hues; and it was clad in paper wrappers. It was sold through the trade; by sub-

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scription — in a volume weighing three pounds and a half; and by gentlemanly agents in the tents of the Great Show. It was touted in the circus programmes and in a “Card Introductory” prefixed to the work itself. When King Kalakaua of Hawaii was entertained by a gala performance of the circus in Madison Square Garden, his host made the circuit of the arena in an open carriage with the dusky monarch, upon whom had already been bestowed the Christmas gift of a specially-bound presentation copy of the host’s autobiography. On his eightieth birthday, Barnum gave an inscribed copy of it to his wife, who by his express direction wrote for the chronicle of his years its “Last Chapter.”

Little Taylor — Taylor was what homefolks called him — was an apt scholar in arithmetic at the district school, and he also must early have had something of a bent toward literary expression; for as a member of a Bible class in the Bethel church he wrote on the subject: “What is the one thing needful?” and his brief preachment amused and edified both congregation and pastor. At the age of twenty-one he actually and amazingly started a liberal newspaper, the “Herald of Freedom,” which he edited with such vigorous ability as to win a local jail-sentence and a more than local circulation. Much of it he clipped, but much of it, too, he wrote — including advertisements. We detect his touch in such pointed paragraphs as these:

Deacon Hall. — We are inclined to believe, from what we have heard, that it will be necessary for us to ‘haul’ this old fellow over the coals once more, and if such proves to be the fact he may depend upon being *scorched*. We will warrant him he will not escape so easily as he did the last time he was tried before the church, for mixing *white corn meal* with his flour and selling the same for flour of the best quality.

The Quaker Case. — At 12 o’clock, on Wednesday last, the

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cause which has been so long on trial at Trenton, N. J., between the Hicksite and Orthodox Quakers, was submitted to the jury.

The case was decided in favor of the *orthodox*. Seven of the eleven Judges, says the N. Y. American, were *Presbyterians*, all of whom voted in favor of the *orthodox*, while the other four, not Presbyterians, all voted in favor of the Hicksites. There is no word which sounds prettier to a Presbyterian ear, than *orthodox* — except *cash*!

For three years he ran the paper, badgering neighborhood dignitaries, proclaiming Jacksonian Democracy, and flaying “the horrid doctrine of an angry God, omnipotent Devil, and endless Hell.” All the while, he was gaining experience in journalistic. When he went to New York in 1834, he turned the “Herald” over to John Amerman, his brother-in-law, and inserted in it this “card”:

MY OMEGA

MY Newspaper accounts are left with J. W. Amerman, for collection. All my other accounts and notes are in the hands of Austin B. Trowbridge, who is authorized to *sue every debtor* without delay. Those who have so long put me off with *promises*, may depend that Mr. Trowbridge will make them ‘*buck up*,’ as he is celebrated for that. So look out!

P. T. BARNUM.

In New York he did publicity writing for the Bowery Amphitheatre and contributed pieces to the Sunday press. While abroad in 1844–1847, he furnished to the “Atlas” a series of one hundred articles. Paragraphs discussing Joice Heth; news-letters on the Fejee Mermaid; “some fresh and startling announcement about my business” — such things he turned out

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in a flowing manner. Indeed, he must be regarded as one of the illustrious pioneers of showman's English, afterwards further developed in adjectival splendor by "Tody" Hamilton and other soaring souls.

He blazoned the hippopotamus as "The Great Behemoth of the Scriptures." His "Happy Family" he described as a "community of Natural Enemies" and a "convention of antagonists," in which "may be seen Cats fondling with Rats and Mice — Dogs playing with Squirrels — Owls on friendly terms with Sparrows — Hawks feeding young Pigeons with motherly solicitude." He gave Charley Stratton the best stage-name any dwarf ever had: Tom Thumb; presented Commodore Nutt as "The 30,000 Dollar Nutt"; and extolled Lavinia Warren as "the little Queen of Beauty." Of the Industrious Fleas he declared: "These insects have been . . . rendered so docile as to be harnessed to carriages and other vehicles of several thousand times their own weight, which they will draw with as much precision as a cart-horse." He glowingly epitomized the American Museum as "a vast National Gallery . . . a million of things in every branch of Nature and Art, comprehending a Cyclopædical Synopsis of everything worth seeing and knowing in this curious world's curious economy." Beneath his wand, an indifferent travelling company became "Barnum's Grand Scientific and Musical Theatre"; a second venture filled mouth and eye with the title "Barnum's Great Asiatic Caravan, Museum, and Menagerie." It was the same Barnum that Dr. Holmes pictured as in age "still struggling with his superlatives." It was the same Barnum that, cabling to the London "Daily Telegraph" his refusal to return Jumbo, was inspired to add (at regular rates): "My largest tent seats 30,000 persons, and is filled twice each day. It contains four rings, in three of which three full circus companies give different performances simultaneously. In the large outer ring, or racing track, the Roman Hippodrome is ex-

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hibited. In two other immense connecting tents my colossal Zoölogical collection and museum are shown."

*
* * *

In 1855 was published "The Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself." It had really been written by himself — neither written *for* him nor even dictated to a secretary; written at Iranistan, in his study hung with orange satin; written, he said, because "I have been repeatedly urged within the last few years to write my life, being assured by publishers that such a work would have an extensive circulation, and by personal friends that it would be a readable book." He had let it be known that he would welcome bids from the publishing world. The lucky man was J. S. Redfield of New York. Redfield, a printer before he turned publisher (Horace Greeley stuck type in Redfield's shop), had on his list the poetical works of Fitz-Greene Halleck; the verses and "Revolutionary tales" of W. G. Simms; Praed, Aytoun, Poe; four volumes by William H. Herbert ("Frank Forrester"); Trench "On the Study of Words"; and that forgotten big seller "Nick of the Woods" (by one R. Montgomery Bird). He brought out the "Life" as a twelvemo of 404 pages, with a steel frontispiece portrait; text illustrations by F. O. C. Darley, the busiest book-illustrator of the day; and a binding of rather sombre respectability, after the fashion of the period. To the preface was affixed "Iranistan, 1854," but the dedication ("To the Universal Yankee Nation") stated that the volume was dated "from the American Museum, Where the Public First Smiled upon Me, and Where Henceforth My Personal Exertions Will Be Devoted to Its Entertainment."

The European tour with Tom Thumb was in the past; so was what the author styled "The Jenny Lind Enterprise." Barnum had taken a flyer as president of the ill-starred Crystal

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Palace, and resigned. The Philadelphia Museum had been opened and sold, and, aided by the publicity of the plowing elephant, the American Museum was going successfully on its way "as one of the most attractive objects in the great commercial emporium of the Western World." Bringing the "Life" to a close on the sixth anniversary of the housewarming of Iranistan, the genial showman, then forty-four years of age, found himself quoting Sir William Temple: ". . . Though, among the follies of my life, building and planting have not been the least, and have cost me more than I have the confidence to own, yet they have been fully recompensed by the sweetness and satisfaction of this retreat." . . .

Doubtless Publisher Redfield felt justified, for the book (as those who treasure such statistics may be interested in knowing) sold in the United States to the extent of 160,000 copies. Author Barnum was gratified, for beside his American readers he had the wide advertisement resulting from one edition in France, one in Germany, and two in England. There was, to be sure, an element of perplexity. Though American critics for the most part hailed the "Life," entered into its mirthful spirit, and chuckled over the Nurse of Washington, the Fejee Mermaid, the Woolly Horse, and the Hoboken Buffalo Hunt, nevertheless some dissenting voices were raised. Severn T. Wallis, for example, not only complained of P. T. that he "foots up his columns of dollars and cents without the slightest affectation of æsthetics," but also declared in scorn: ". . . Having been paid for cheating, he is now glad to explain, for further pay, the details of his *modus operandi*." "Lie and swindle as much as you please — says the voice from Iranistan — but be sure you read your Bible and drink no brandy!" — thus Wallis, and others scolded to the same effect.

The worst were the British magazines (including the ponderous "Edinburgh Review"), which, scandalized by the revela-

THE
L I F E
OF
P. T. B A R N U M
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF



REDFIELD
110 AND 112 NASSAU STREET, NEW-YORK
1855

[*Fac-simile*]

TO
THE UNIVERSAL YANKEE NATION,

OF WHICH

I AM PROUD TO BE ONE,

I DEDICATE THESE PAGES,

DATING THEM FROM

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM,

WHERE THE PUBLIC FIRST SMILED UPON ME, AND WHERE HENCEFORTH MY PERSONAL
EXERTIONS WILL BE DEVOTED TO ITS ENTERTAINMENT.

P. T. BARNUM.

AMERICAN MUSEUM, }
New-York, Nov. 30, 1854. }

[*Fac-simile*]

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tions of how the famed Yankee manager had managed British society for his own purposes, reproved him fervently and at length. Up in the orange-hung study at Iranistan, he must at first have wondered. Had he not in his preface forestalled all this? "It will be seen," he had written, "that I have not covered up my so-called 'humbugs'." . . . "None of my enterprises, however, have been omitted, and though a portion of my 'confessions' may by some be considered injudicious, I prefer frankly to 'acknowledge the corn' wherever I have had a hand in plucking it." Why all the pother? However, Barnum, even then a vastly popular person, was not temperamentally likely to dwindle, peak, or pine. After he had wondered, he surely laughed, there amid the orange brocade and the rococo furniture.

*
* *

In 1869 went forth a call for agents to vend a new Barnum autobiography — a call offering "extra inducements" and urging all-and-sundry to send for 32-page Circular, Specimen Engraving, and Terms. The new book was sold by subscription only, the publishers being J. B. Burr & Co., of Hartford — a town in which over a hundred newspapers and periodicals are said to have been set going, and which long was something of a book-publishing center.

Since the publication of the 1855 "Life," considerable water had passed under the bridge. Barnum had indorsed notes of the Jerome Clock company of New Haven, and then, after the company had unaccountably failed, had assumed obligations amounting to over \$500,000. He had gone again to England with Tom Thumb, and with the "General" had toured Germany, Holland, Scotland, and Wales. He had lectured to English audiences on "The Art of Money-Getting," and had refused for the copyright of the lecture a London publisher's

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offer of £1,200. He had met his disciple John Fitch of Bury, whose daughter Nancy was later to become Barnum's second wife. In 1865 the American Museum, "replete with curiosities of every description," for nearly a quarter-century a "famous place of Sterling Entertainment" and an "elegant place of popular resort, certainly one of the most enterprising and creditable in our city," was burned. Barnum had sold the lease (which had eleven years to run) to James Gordon Bennett, and further up Broadway had opened another museum. Incidentally, he had served with distinction two terms in the General Assembly of Connecticut and had stood for Congress.

On March 3, 1868, the New American Museum went the way of the old, and Barnum now took the advice of his friend Horace Greeley, given in 1865 but then unheeded: "Accept this fire as a notice to quit, and go a-fishing." He found the time opportune, "now that I have retired from all active participation in business," for preparing his "Struggles and Triumphs; or, Forty Years' Recollections of P. T. Barnum." The "Life" of 1855 he referred to as very imperfect and designed "for the purpose, principally, of advancing my interests as proprietor of the American Museum." His later career had, he thought, been "more eventful." (Meanwhile, the "Life" had gone out of print and the plates had been destroyed.) "Struggles and Triumphs" he characterized (with a noble gush of showman's English) as "the matured and leisurely review of almost half a century of work and struggle, and final success, in spite of fraud and fire — the story of which is blended with amusing anecdotes, funny passages, felicitous jokes, captivating narratives, novel experiences, and remarkable interviews — the sunny and sombre so intermingled as not only to entertain, but convey useful lessons to all classes of readers."

This second book was a substantial affair — a large octavo that could by no means be held readily in the hand. Portions

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of its more than seven hundred pages had been taken over from the 1855 volume, but the history of the author's earlier days had been abbreviated (some of it having been transferred to a "Story Chapter" that subsequently was dropped), and that of Tom Thumb's first foreign tour and of Jenny Lind in America had been correspondingly extended. Joice Heth, the Mermaid, the Woolly Horse, and the Buffalo Hunt had now but a reserved and straitened mention. Many new things there were to tell about the old museum; Tom Thumb had been married; war had been waged against Connecticut railways, against Bennett of the "Herald"; Barnum had travelled the country as a public lecturer; Iranistan had given place to Lindencroft, that in turn to Waldemere. With Waldemere and its owner's "formal and final retirement from the managerial profession," ends the original "Struggles and Triumphs."

*
* * *

After a while, Barnum bought from Burr the copyright and plates of the work. Probably the subscription field had then been well covered at prices of \$3.50 and upwards, according to binding. The author now controlled the publication, and he had it brought out, under various imprints, in cheaper and inferior style. The old plates were used for the body of the volume; additional chapters in smaller type brought the narrative to date. Finally appeared yet another form. The book, after having been rather severely blue-pencilled, had been set entirely in smaller type and ran to only a little more than three hundred pages. Thus it continued to be published, with yearly additions, through 1889. It must have been in this its last, and mechanically its worst, estate that Gladstone read the "Struggles," for Barnum said: "He [Gladstone] told me he had read my book of reminiscences, but had one complaint to make. 'I have only

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one objection to make,' he said — 'that is, that it is printed in too small type.' I acknowledged the fact." . . .

*
* *

Such were the consecutive versions of the Barnum autobiography. In 1882 an authorized statement regarding "Struggles and Triumphs" was: "Half a million copies . . . have been sold, and scores of thousands are sold each year. It has been published in various forms and numerous editions in England, and has been translated and largely circulated in France, Germany, and Holland." By 1883, so Barnum wrote, editions of fifty thousand copies were being printed. "It will thus be seen," he remarked, "that 'Barnum' has occupied so much public attention for forty years, that the fact need not be wondered at (and it *is* a fact), that in 1870 a letter mailed in New Zealand, and addressed simply 'Mr. Barnum, America,' came as direct to me at Waldemere, in Bridgeport, Conn., as it could have done if my full address had been written on the envelope." By 1884 he was cheerfully proclaiming: "The whole or any portion of this book may be published by any parties without objection or claim of copyright on the part of the Author." Whereupon it was presented in the same year by a Chicago firm under the inviting title "How I Made Millions; or, The Secret of Success." By 1888 he could state that "over a million copies have already been sold" and notify the world that the retail price had been reduced to fifty cents. The book was sold by the wagon-load in the Barnum show, and even the bonus of a free ticket with each and every copy was used to stimulate sales. To the eyes of the delighted author, the departing crowds, when leaving the "big top" after a performance, looked "as if they were coming out of a circulating library." In the Olympia programmes, when the Greatest Show on Earth first visited London, patrons were assured that they could purchase "for merely

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a nominal price " Mr. Barnum's compendium of "interesting incidents and sound practical hints."

* * *

Much that was amusing, much that contributed to a fuller knowledge of Barnum, appeared in the 1855 "Life" but was omitted from the "Struggles and Triumphs" of 1869 or reduced to what was comparatively a mere outline. For one thing, Barnum doubtless felt that re-proportionment was necessary if he were not to be overwhelmed by the sheer bulk of his own narrative. The revised, shorter form of "Struggles and Triumphs" lacks the leisurely detail and discursive freedom of the original, and has its chief value in its continuation of the story from 1869 onward. All versions have been long out of print. The present edition for the first time gathers the best of the autobiography in its chief stages (since plainly no one of these stages would suffice), and fashions in a continuous relation as complete a Barnum as may be, from the Bethel cradle (still, by the way, preserved in the museum of the Fairfield County Historical Society) to the tomb in Mountain Grove.

* * *

It is truly idle to say that no autobiography comparable to Barnum's has ever been written by another showman. Its like has never been written by anybody. "What a book! What a collection of books!" exclaims Gamaliel Bradford, a writer nourished on autobiographic fare.

Werner repeats an anecdote about a woman that had a complete set of the successive issues of the Barnum story. To the unwearied author she once remarked: "You know, Mr. Barnum, I am continually busy with your 'Life.' You have no idea how much I enjoy reading it." And the unwearied author re-

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sponded to his untiring admirer: "My dear madam, that is nothing to the way I enjoy living it." This spirit lends to Barnum's recital, despite dull stretches, a high vitality.

For, first of all, the book is an abounding book, quick with native gusto. It is the expression of a man thoroughly enjoying his world, his work, and himself. In his preface of 1855 he said: ". . . On the whole, my life has been a merry one. I have looked chiefly on the bright side of things, and from the various anecdotes with which this volume is interspersed some of my readers may think I have inclined too much to the ludicrous." The new preface of 1869 proclaims: ". . . My natural disposition impels me to look upon the brighter side of life, and I hope my humorous experiences will entertain my readers as much as they were enjoyed by myself." So late as 1888 he admitted that he was "blessed with a vigor and buoyancy of spirits vouchsafed to but few," and affirmed that "this is indeed a beautiful, delightful world to those who have the temperament, the resolution, and the judgment to make it so."

Bailey, the able partner whose name became linked so fixedly with Barnum's, was "troubled about many things." Always, when on tour, he was scanning the face of the heavens, looking for a storm that might stampede the elephants. Barnum was troubled about little. The cry is, "Iranistan is in flames!" (This was in 1852, not 1857.) Barnum says, "Never mind! We can't help these things; the house will probably be burned." While he is denouncing railway lobbyists and their schemes, news arrives that the American Museum is certain to be destroyed. He finishes the speech; his bill is carried; members surround him. "Mr. Barnum," protests his chief opponent, "I am really very sorry." "Sorry!" returns Barnum. "Why, my dear sir, I shall not have time to be sorry in a week! It will take me that length of time before I can get over laughing at having whipped you all so nicely in this attempted railroad imposition." At two in the

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morning this telegram reaches him: "Large animal building entirely consumed. Six horses in ring barn burned, together with entire menagerie except thirty elephants and one lion." This is the fifth time he has been a heavy loser by fire. "Apparent evils are often blessings in disguise," he says. "It is all right." Then he goes to sleep. His general attitude is summarized in his greeting to the St. Paul's vestrymen: "Keep cool, gentlemen."

The Jerome Clock entanglement was, to be sure, "disheartening" — "but I had energy, experience, health, and hope." Shortly he was beginning to foresee that "my new city which had been my ruin was to be my redemption, and dear East Bridgeport which plunged me into the slough was to bring me out again. 'Dear' as the place had literally proved to me, it was to be yet dearer in another and better sense, hereafter." It was all very much like the occasion when the "Canadian giantess" laid him flat with a well-directed blow. Says he: "I was on my feet again in tolerably quick time."

He does speak of a letter "generally published in the American papers," that purported to be from Jenny Lind and offered to advance "a large sum of money" for his aid in his financial difficulties. This letter he at once declared a forgery. A young Philadelphia reporter confessed to the authorship, "saying that he wrote it from a good motive, hoping it would benefit me." Barnum repels the notion: "On the contrary it annoyed me exceedingly." There is something not altogether displeasing in the discovery that P. T. could be annoyed exceedingly — at least once!

One Sunday in a remote settlement of North Carolina, while he was wandering through the South with his first little tent-show, he decided, apparently with no reason save his own exuberance, to address a Baptist congregation just let out of church. Probably they had listened to a full-length orthodox sermon,

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but they repaired none the less promptly to a near-by grove, where for forty-five minutes Barnum discoursed on "the duties and privileges of man." He was well received and "went away with the feeling that possibly I might have done some good in the beautiful grove on that charming Sunday morning." Not so long afterward, his regular negro vocalist having suddenly quit the troupe, Manager Barnum donned burnt-cork; sang "Old Zip Coon" and other songs, as advertised; won much applause; gave two encores.

"Who," asks Bob Sherwood, one of P. T.'s old clowns, "is the showman to-day that can deliver a sermon from the pulpit, give a lecture, or be elected to represent his district in the Legislature?" Ah, who indeed?

"The cloud of mortal destiny,
Others will front it fearlessly —
But who, like him, will put it by?"

In prison (twice — the second time, in Pittsburgh); in journeyings often; in perils of waters; in perils in the city; in perils among false brethren; with a loaded pistol pointed at his head on four different occasions; struck by a slung-shot that mashed his hat and grazed "the protuberance where phrenologists locate 'the organ of caution'"; attacked at seventy by an illness well-nigh fatal — this man apostolically (and to his mind, providentially) escaped, and he beamed with gratitude. He was, so his friend Joel Benton, the poet, tells us, "the personification of jollity" — one whose "atmosphere of fun and good humor never seemed to abate." "Every one who has been in the [French] wine district," Barnum wrote, "knows that the wine is trodden from the grapes by the bare feet of the peasants, and while I was there [in 1844], desiring a new experience, I myself trod out a half-barrel or so with my own naked feet, dancing

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vigorously the while to the sound of a fiddle." Idyllic picture, lacking only an ivy-crown inwoven with flowers and scented parsley!

"On two occasions," relates Charles J. Finger, "I had the good fortune to meet men who had been associated with Barnum. . . . Both men agreed in one thing relative to Barnum and that was that he was always excited and hilarious when he hit upon a new conception, and went about among those he chose to confide in, talking what seemed to be extravagant nonsense about possibilities." "He fairly reeked with his idea," was the phrase of one of these old-timers. Sherwood's testimony is: "I consider him the greatest genius that ever conducted an amusement enterprise in this country, a man of superlative imagination, indomitable pluck and artistic temperament. For nearly twenty years, I had an opportunity to study him at close range, and never once did I see him falter in anything he set out to do." The London "Times" said of him, "He created the *métier* of showman on a grandiose scale. . . . When, in 1889, the veteran brought over his shipload of giants and dwarfs, chariots and waxworks, spangles and circus riders, to entertain the people of London, one wanted a Carlyle to come forward with a discourse upon the Hero as Showman."

Large, robust, sanguine, with his "peculiar mirthful smile," he walked the earth like some force of nature. His was the faculty for spacious gesture. To the Briton who suggested one penny as the proper admission-fee at Tom Thumb's "levees," he orotundly answered: "Never shall the price be less than one shilling sterling and some of the nobility and gentry will yet pay gold to see General Tom Thumb." Has that not the air of great commanders delivering ultimatums? There was about him a sort of aura. "In Mr. Barnum's rides," notes Benton, "no one, even if he were a stranger on the road, failed to know who it was that passed." Recalling the days when, in the old Madi-

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son Square Garden, he "trembled before the Wild Man of Borneo, fed peanuts to Jumbo and joined in the applause when the Master of the Show — himself a part of it — made entrance into his box," George S. Seymour adds: "One morning in the dining-room of the old Grand Union Hotel (another reminiscence), my aunt pointed out a stout man breakfasting alone at an adjoining table and said, 'That's Barnum.' I gazed, and remembered."

"If," confesses Barnum, "I showed myself about the Museum or wherever else I was known, I found eyes peering and fingers pointing at me, and could frequently overhear the remark, 'There's Barnum.' On one occasion . . . I was sitting in the ticket-office, reading a newspaper. A man came and purchased a ticket of admission. 'Is Mr. Barnum in the Museum?' he asked. The ticket-seller, pointing to me, answered, 'This is Mr. Barnum.' Supposing the gentleman had business with me, I looked up from the paper. 'Is this Mr. Barnum?' he asked. 'It is,' I replied. He stared at me for a moment, and then, throwing down his ticket, exclaimed, 'It's all right; I have got the worth of my money!' — and away he went without going into the Museum at all!"

After many years, Charles Finger cherished a "vivid impression" of Barnum at seventy-nine, driven in a barouche into the Olympia arena. "The performance was halted for his entry, the signal being a blast of trumpets as if an emperor came. Acrobats stood then with folded arms, trapeze performers sat idle on their bars, clowns ceased their fooling, and horsemen dismounted. Then the bands played very *fortissimo*, and the air was 'See the Conquering Hero Comes.' And so Barnum entered!"

"I am 'a showman' by profession, and all the gilding shall make nothing else of me." So Barnum boasted, and the title "Prince of Showmen," bestowed on him by the press, was a

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greater delight to him than any patent of nobility could possibly have been. How he revelled in the fact that the American Museum was the most popular place of amusement in the United States — that it had annually a larger number of visitors than entered the British Museum, to which admission was free! Again to quote his good friend Benton, “He did not care who was to be eminent in any field if only he might be acknowledged as the unparalleled purveyor of amusements.” In 1868 he thought to retire. Later, he wrote of the *ennui* that seized him when he found himself withdrawn from showmanship. He became the cicerone of sightseeing parties travelling to Niagara Falls, Cuba, and the South; to San Francisco and back. Thus, as he said, he was “a showman of ‘natural curiosities’ on a most magnificent scale.” As he gazed from San Francisco at the Seal Rocks, “the ‘show fever’ began to rise.” Thereupon, “I offered fifty thousand dollars to have ten of the large sea lions delivered to me alive in New York, so that I could fence in a bit of the East River near Jones’ Wood, and give such an exhibition to citizens and strangers in that city.” Then he sent Tom Thumb, with a party of twelve, on a tour around the world. Finally, in the autumn, “from the very necessity of my active nature . . . I began to prepare a great show enterprise.” A great show enterprise! His whole life was that.

In his younger days, he looked out upon the American scene and became convinced that the chief defect of the civilization about him was its “severe and drudging practicalness.” “With the most universal diffusion of the means of happiness ever known among any people, we are,” he argued, “unhappy.” Something over a quarter-century later, he observed, in that large, lusty way of his, “I think I can, without egotism, say that I have amused and instructed more persons than any other manager who ever lived.” As he increased in age and prestige, he increased, too, in his expansive “desire to make people

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happy." When he was seventy-seven, he wrote: "It is the pride of my declining years that I am able to give, as the result of my long life of experience and determined effort, that innocent and educational diversion which everyone concedes that human nature imperatively demands." His wide, benign face looked out from countless billboards. To General Grant he commented, "General, since your journey around the world you are the best-known man on the globe." The General's reply was, "No, sir. Your name is familiar to multitudes who never heard of me. Wherever I went, among the most distant nations, the fact that I was an American led to constant inquiries whether I knew Barnum." Elatedly Barnum chronicled the fact that in one town where his show exhibited, a factory bore this placard: "*Closed on account of the greatest interference on earth.*" Secretary Blaine greeted him with, "Well, Barnum, all the children in America are anxious to see your show." And President Garfield chimed in with, "Yes, Mr. Barnum is the Kris Kringle of America."

Barnum narrates that one year he met the show at Erie, Pennsylvania, and seated himself amid the audience ("for," he explains, right royally, "I like to mingle with the crowd *incognito*"). In front of him sat an old farmer and the farmer's wife. Said the farmer, "After all, there is one thing I would give more to see than the whole show, and that is Barnum himself." Presently, into the ring dashed a young equestrian riding four spirited bare-backed horses. The equestrian did a somersault, and, alighting on his head, rode thus around the ring, heels in air. The farmer jumped up, swung his hat, and cried: "I'll bet five dollars that's Barnum! There ain't another man in America who can do that but Barnum!" No wonder Benton decides that if Barnum had lived in a mythologic time, "he would have had some setting in a Pantheon, or glorification as a Joy-bringer or supermagnified Santa Claus that would

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have associated him permanently with a company equal to that of Olympus or Valhalla."

This man was, it appears, as we might expect, an approachable, social, amicable being. He was fond of entertaining guests at his home, and was, according to all accounts, an ideal host. "The charm of Mr. Barnum's hospitality." — the words are Joel Benton's — "was that it consisted in having everything done for you without effort and without constraint." Rides, picnics, clam-bakes were often on the programme, in pleasant weather. Sometimes the backgammon-board was brought out or a game of euchre was proposed. ("Any one who can play euchre is my friend," was one of Barnum's sayings.) Meals were bountiful — and punctual. Chauncey Depew says that Barnum, "with his vast fund of anecdotes and reminiscences," was "very entertaining socially." Depew continues: "An Englishman of note came to me with a letter of introduction, and I asked him whom he would like to meet. He said: 'I think principally Mr. P. T. Barnum.' I told this to Barnum, who knew all about him, and said: 'As a gentleman, he knows how to meet me.' When I informed my English friend, he expressed his regret and at once sent Barnum his card and an invitation for dinner. At the dinner Barnum easily carried off the honors with his wonderful fund of unusual adventures." Barnum celebrated his eightieth birthday with a dinner to all the "help" at Marina and all those (with their families) that in any capacity worked for him in Bridgeport. He was on hand to make a jolly speech.

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Such was the temper, such the spirit, of the amazing man that wrote this amazing history. We may admit Carlyle's dictum, "The uttered part of a man's life . . . bears to the unuttered, unconscious part a small unknown proportion." Yet, reading

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Barnum's book *in extenso*, we do see that he uttered a great deal of himself, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Utterance in a broad sense, in this way or that, was of his nature. He fairly gambolled for thirty-five years in his autobiography, which was done *con amore* if ever anything was. ". . . An autobiography," he urged, "has attractions and merits superior to those of a 'Life' written by another, who, however intimate with its subject, cannot know all that helps to give interest and accuracy to the narrative, or completeness to the character. The story from the actor's own lips has always a charm it can never have when told by another." How he would have hated to resign to "another" the job in which he expatiated on his career, descanted upon its glories, entered full glosses upon his doings, aroused the echoes of old laughter, and

"Fought all his battles o'er again" . . . !

* * *

In Barnum's own day, the "practical" value of the autobiography was stressed. After reading the 1855 "Life," John Fitch asked himself the momentous question, "Why can't I go ahead and make money as Barnum did?" Forthwith he *advertised* — advertised for a partner; finally "obtained one with money"; devoted himself to his mill, and was "very successful." Calling on Barnum at Manchester in 1858, he said: "I know every line in your book; so, indeed, do several members of my family; and I have conducted my business on the principles laid down in your published 'Rules for Money-Making.' I find them correct principles; and, sir, I have sought this interview in order to thank you for publishing your autobiography, and to tell you that to that act of yours I attribute my present position in life." And he added earnestly, "I am sure I should have worked as

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STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS:

OR,

FORTY YEARS' RECOLLECTIONS

OF

P. T. BARNUM.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

"——— a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations, and its vast concerns."

HARTFORD:
J. B. BURR & COMPANY.
1869.

[*Fac-simile*]

TO
MY WIFE AND FAMILY

I DEDICATE

THIS STORY OF A LIFE WHICH HAS BEEN LARGELY
DEVOTED TO THEIR

INTERESTS AND SERVICE.

[*Fac-simile*]

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a mill-hand all my life if it had not been for you." Barnum reasonably termed this a "singular yet gratifying interview."

"Every young man should read it," declared advertisements of "Struggles and Triumphs," of which it was further said that it was "by many distinguished persons in America and Europe pronounced unsurpassed as a guide to youth." "It contains," urged others, "his celebrated Lecture on the ART OF MONEY-GETTING, with Rules for Success in Business." "The late Horace Greeley," boasted Barnum, "wrote that this book, and especially the lecture on the Art of Money-Getting, was 'worth a hundred-dollar greenback to a beginner in life.'" One Sunday evening in 1875, Baltimore was the scene of a lecture by Henry Hilgert, Esq., in the assembly-hall of the Turn-Verein "Vorwärts." Here is a report of it as proudly quoted by Barnum from the Baltimore "Saturday Night" of March 6 of that year:

"The large hall was crowded with ladies and gentlemen, belonging largely to the more educated and refined class of Germans, and the audience having acquaintance with the orator through the medium of several lectures delivered last year anticipated an instructive and agreeable entertainment. We are pleased to agree with the German daily papers of our city in the statement that the expectations of all who were present were more than realized.

"Mr. Hilgert took for his text 'Barnum and his Book.'

"After an interesting introduction of his subject, in which he dwelt with caustic severity upon the weakness of those who run into hasty judgment of men and their works without really knowing anything about them, the lecturer said: 'As I know of no book which is better adapted to become a thoroughly instructive and agreeable guide through life, for the youths of our country, than the record and experiences of the exemplarily industrious, intelligent, strictly honest and moral citizen, Phineas Taylor Barnum, I will devote my to-day's address to him

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and his book.' Charity Barnum, the showman's first wife, was very highly spoken of, and recommended to the ladies as a wife, mother and companion worth imitating.

"Mr. Hilgert, after giving some of Barnum's anecdotes, which, by the way, he rendered to perfection, gave a graphic description of Barnum's career as a merchant, editor, showman, legislator and public lecturer, and in all was his enthusiastic panegyrist. In the description of Barnum's seven years' hard work to pay off over half a million dollars' indebtedness incurred by indorsements for the Jerome Clock Company, the speaker waxed warm and eloquent, and called forth applause that testified fully to his ability as an advocate.

"After explaining Barnum's manly behavior in great pecuniary catastrophes, and after giving a graphic description of Barnum's suffering in Hamburg, in 1873, upon the arrival of the news of the death of his beloved wife, Mr. Hilgert concluded his lecture with the following words:

" 'I have perhaps detained you longer than you anticipated, and certainly longer than I should have done if I had been able to compress the abundance of interesting material into a smaller compass, and, at the conclusion of my address, I give you my thanks for your very close attention, and I pray you to recommend the good citizen, Phineas Taylor Barnum, to your children as an exemplary man. When you give one of your daughters away in matrimony, advise her to imitate Charity Barnum; when your son leaves home to try his luck upon the ocean of life, give him Barnum for a guide; when you yourself are in trouble and misery and near desperation, take from Barnum's life and teachings consolation and new courage, and, after you all have received instructive enjoyment from Barnum's mind, heart, and actions, join me in the wish that the old gentleman in his new matrimony may find many joyful and happy days.' "

Times do change — *et nos mutamur in illis*. To-day Bar-

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num's "Rules for Success" — rules that were incorporated in Freedley's "Practical Treatise on Business" and that inspired the serious John Fitch — read like diluted Samuel Smiles. So does "The Art of Money-Getting," lecture esteemed by Horace Greeley and praised in the London "Times." Who does not know that in this cumulatively pushful land Samuel Smiles was long ago superseded by Orison Swett Marden; by journalistic clergymen; by pseudo-psychologists; by glib prophetesses of cults and no-cults, sweetly revealing how one obtains whatever one wishes; by magazines that analyze material aggrandizement and dissect for our study the living multi-millionaire; by correspondence schools that in easy lessons teach how to "get on"; by multifarious organizations designed systematically to promote enlightened self-interest? As a guide to success, Barnum is a primitive.

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Taking the autobiography, then, as just a human document, and ignoring its deliberately instructive features, we encounter a full, leisurely narrative, done with vast relish. The style is, as one might expect, facile, in a high-spirited and careless way. The story, bulk considered, well maintains its interest. Of course it has its dull spots, but these are relatively few for a performance so non-selective and unexclusive. It has, too, its crudities, on which a few of Barnum's recent critics have borne down heavily; over-heavily, I incline to think. Doubtless, for example, the 1855 "Life" contains some more or less irrelevant and long-spun yarns of the Bethel neighborhood. I have omitted several that seemed to me to encumber the record and to add nothing of value. On the other hand, I have retained a goodly number that are of service in helping us to understand Barnum's early environment and formative influences. They are also a contribution to the lore of New England life in the first third

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of the nineteenth century, before the coming of the railway or the rise of large industrial centers. So far as humor is concerned, these bits are quite humorous enough; and their very crudities ought to be a relief from the invariable urbanity and subtleness of most of the *farceurs* in current favor.

In all conscience, how varied and how picturesque are the mere elements of the chronicle! Before he is twelve, Our Hero rides on horseback behind a drove of cattle into "York." The year was 1822, and a pilgrimage to "York," especially in the rôle of a Yankee cowboy, was a most romantic and envied adventure. After clerking in country stores, he opened a country store of his own, in the stock of which were stewed oysters and cheap finger-rings. He conducted a lottery-office; for at that time lotteries were legal in Connecticut, and a popular form of diversion in village and countryside. When scarcely past twenty-one, he founded an independent journal; and for telling the truth in it he was, within a year, imprisoned in the common jail for sixty days. After a while, he began as a showman. He exhibited Joice Heth and Signor Vivalla, then joined a travelling circus and toured with it in New England and the South. Next, he headed travelling companies going through North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana. This life of a stroller in the old South was one of odd experiences and frequent hazard. Here he was appearing, when need was, as a negro minstrel; there he was outwitting a sheriff. He was threatened with death, and he and his troupe were mobbed by armed roughs. At Vicksburg he bought a steamboat, and away went the little band of entertainers, stopping where they chose along the way; on down the same mighty river whereon drifted Huck and Nigger Jim and the Dauphin and the Duke of Bilgewater. The "Ceres," Captain Barnum, turned up safely at New Orleans and eventually was exchanged for molasses and sugar.

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After a false start or two, Barnum becomes the proprietor of the American Museum, on the façade of which is blazoned his name — a name soon to be literally a household word. His unusual publicity makes the Museum the world's most popular amusement resort. We see him and Tom Thumb, two Connecticut Yankees, at the courts of Victoria and Louis Philippe. We see him leading Jenny Lind down the gang-plank of the "Atlantic" before the cheering throng; watch him mount beside the driver of her carriage — "as a legitimate advertisement." On that September night, after the Nightingale has triumphed, we hear five thousand persons calling "Barnum! Barnum!" — and behold him "reluctantly respond." And so it goes. Well may he say: "Few men in civil life have had a career more crowded with incident, enterprise, and various intercourse with the world than mine."

The scope of his life, like that of his activities, was impressive. It reached from the administration of Madison to that of Benjamin Harrison. It was familiar with the New York of Halleck, Willis, Irving, and Poe; it knew the city of the "elegant eighties." Barnum heard the burning of Danbury by the British described by eye-witnesses; and he himself looked on at military drill during the War of 1812. He provided Castle Garden with the most famous event in all its long history. Few are aware that there Lafayette and Kossuth were received, and Morse demonstrated the electric telegraph; but anybody can tell you that Jenny Lind sang there. The Barnum who saw the huge parterre festively adorned, and a hundred ushers with rosettes and wands, likewise saw the old structure used for thirty-five years as a landing-place for immigrants, and saw those immigrants playing their part in the utter metamorphosis of the compact, tree-shaded town of some 300,000 inhabitants that surrounded the museum he bought in 1841.

Among his friends he counted Edward Everett, Dion Bouci-

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cault, Charles Kean, Houdin, Thackeray (whom he advised regarding the novelist's first American lecture-tour). Lord Rosebery invited him to a "luxurious meal." The two exchanged compliments, the host remarking that "he had read my autobiography," had viewed "with amazement and delight the scenes at my Roman Hippodrome," and felt bound to meet a man "so celebrated throughout the world for the magnitude and perfection of his enterprises." His lordship proved to be an excellent *raconteur* — and, what was better, "a capital listener." So amused was he by Barnum's anecdotes and personal experiences that "more than once, he pushed back his chair from the table and gave vent to his hilarity." Gladstone, when he visited the Olympia on the evening of January 30, 1890, asked that Barnum sit beside him throughout the exhibition. Matthew Arnold dined and lodged at Waldemere; thither went Clemens from Hartford and Greeley from New York. When Barnum was in London in 1889 with the Greatest Show on Earth (otherwise known as the Great Barnum & Bailey World's Fair of Wonders), he was honored by a resplendent banquet under the presidency of the Earl of Kilmorey, with a committee of prodigious size and overwhelming distinction.

He called upon Andrew Jackson at The Hermitage and on Fillmore at the White House; looked at Benton, Calhoun, Clay, J. Q. Adams, Polk, and Webster in their seats in Congress, and heard Calhoun speak; met Daniel O'Connell and was present when O'Connell made an "eloquent and powerful" address in Dublin. He introduced General Tom Thumb, uniformed as Napoleon I, to the Duke of Wellington; presented Webster to Jenny Lind; and with Commodore Nutt was received by Lincoln. Henry Irving included him among "seventy gentlemen of note" at a dinner on the Lyceum stage. In 1882 when "by special invitation" he attended in London a military tournament (part of which he thought not unlike "the grand en-

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trées' of my circus rings"), he was pointed out to the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge, who thereupon "rose and gave me a good stare, and then smilingly conversed."

Of this long, merry, richly variegated life, Barnum lived to rehearse all but the very ultimate phase. "Probably," commented the London "Times" (November 11, 1889), "he prefers to be a showman; and in the maintenance of that character it is to be wished he may double his present ripe age, and more than rival his own negro nurse of General Washington. The vocation suffices for any ambition."

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Barnum's sprightliness is pretty generally in evidence in his autobiography. "By the time I was twelve years old," says he, "I was the owner of a sheep and a calf, and should soon, no doubt, have become a small Cræsus, had not my father kindly permitted me to purchase my own clothing." . . . When the Waterloo guide had pointed out the exact spots where various celebrities had fallen, "I asked him if he could tell me where Captain Tippiwiche of the Connecticut Fusileers was killed. 'Oui, monsieur,' he replied, with perfect confidence." . . . "You buy the American Museum!" exclaimed a friend. "What do you intend buying it with?" "Brass," returned Barnum, "for silver and gold I have none." "Are the services about to commence?" inquired the maiden lady from Maine, as she heard the crowd making for the Lecture Room. "Yes," replied the American Museum's proprietor, "the congregation is now going up."

Examined by his creditors' lawyers in supplementary proceedings, he resented the supercilious and insulting pose of a dwarfish attorney "who reminded me of 'Quilp'." "What is

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your business?" demanded this "little 'limb of the law'." "Attending bar." "Attending bar! Attending bar! Why, don't you profess to be a temperance man — a teetotaler? . . . Where do you attend bar, and for whom?" "I attend the bar of this court, nearly every day, for the benefit of two-penny, would-be lawyers and their greedy clients." — Another lawyer explained "in a half laughing, apologetic tone": "You see, Mr. Barnum, I am searching after the small things; I am willing to take even the crumbs which fall from the rich man's table!" "Which," retorted Barnum, "are you, Lazarus, or one of the dogs?"

Lecturing on temperance to more than three thousand persons in Lyceum Hall, New Orleans, he was "in the midst of an argument illustrating the poisonous and destructive nature of alcohol." A heckler called out: "How does it affect us, externally or internally?" "*E*-ternally," Barnum flung back promptly, and "heard no more from the inquisitive gentleman." "By heavens," said a man in Barnum's hotel, "Barnum got out 'eternally' before the fellow had finished 'internally'."

Why should the fastidious connoisseur find it necessary to cavil that here are not instances of wit in its most artful, ingenious, and exquisite form? "'T is enough, 't will serve" — though it be not so deep as a well. Time has not abolished the spontaneity, the saltiness, the impact, of these and like casual impromptus.

How the Great Showman did enjoy sending out the man with the five bricks for the purpose of "making a lively corner near the Museum"! "What is the object of this?" the man quite naturally wished to know. "No matter," said the Showman. . . . "It is a bit of my fun." With serious mien and feigning deafness, the man went his rounds, while from the niche in St. Paul's Chapel the dingy apostle looked perplexedly down.

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What sport it was, on that St. Patrick's day, to display the banner

TO THE EGRESS

— to hear visitors observe, "The Aigress, sure that's an animal we haven't seen" — to watch them throng down the back-stairs into Ann street and the great world of out-of-doors!

Barnum's delight is patent when he is fooling Aaron Turner with a catch-question; chaffing with the proprietor of a penny-show in Holborn; listening to the unmusical strains of the Museum's "discordant balcony band" — "the poorest band I could find"; or waiting for his associates to convince an audience of Georgia crackers that the show is over. In Boston, as he is leaving the railway station, a policeman mistakes him for Stephen A. Douglas and commands, "Make way there for Judge Douglas' carriage!" "Douglas, Douglas, hurrah for Douglas!" yells the crowd. "I took off my hat and bowed, smiling from the windows on each side of my carriage; the cheers and enthusiasm increased as I advanced, and all the way to the Revere House I continued to bow Judge Douglas' grateful acknowledgments for the enthusiastic reception." Whether he is spoofing his Lecture Room audience with the yarn of the cherry-colored cat, or assuring Paul Smith that the pepper on Paul's table is half peas, he amply savors the occasion. But he does so equally when the laugh is on him. He divulges freely how he offered to buy from Deacon Silliman a piece of salt meadow that he himself had owned for three years; how he paid \$50 for a "fine oil painting" of Jenny Lind that turned out to be a varnished lithograph; how he came near to being ridden on a rail.

Like Cicero and Shakespeare, Barnum was an inveterate punster. He and his good friend the Rev. E. H. Chapin contested in jousts of punning, and ever and anon a quibble is dropped into the autobiography. Referring to his first wife,

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Barnum says, "Without Charity I am nothing." "There is," he notes, "a general and constant exercise of brooms, pails, floor-brushes, and mops all over Holland, and in some places even, this kind of thing is carried so far, I am told, that the only trees set out are scrub-oaks." Jerome clocks, he reports, were sold in China, and the Celestials were said to take out the movements and use the cases as cabinets for idols — "thus proving that faith was possible without 'works'." On the occasion of Mademoiselle Lind's arrival aboard the "Atlantic," one zealous gentleman fell overboard from a sloop jammed with spectators; and of him Barnum disposes by saying that he took a cold duck instead of a view of the Nightingale.

Here are also such diverting tales as those of the Simpsons abroad; Tom Thumb's courtship; a sightseeing day with Albert Smith; and the retreat from Waterloo in a manure-cart. At every turn one comes upon the impress of Barnumian publicity. Barnum puts on the rails not a simple lower-case advertising car but a Magnificent Advertising Car. In the centennial year of 1876 his show takes along on tour not merely a Goddess of Liberty, a choir to render patriotic hymns, and a company of performers garbed as Continentals — not merely these but in addition a live eagle, and a battery of artillery that each morning fires a salute of thirteen guns to the glory of the Yankee Nation and the Great Show!

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Barnum was an irrepressible practical joker. Illustrations of this bent of his are scattered from end to end of the autobiography. At its outset he writes: "My grandfather Phineas Taylor was decidedly a wag. He was a practical joker. He would go farther, wait longer, work harder, and contrive deeper, to carry out a practical joke, than for anything else under heaven." Philo Barnum, too, we learn, "relished a joke better than the

STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS

OR,

SIXTY YEARS' RECOLLECTIONS

OF
P. T. BARNUM,

INCLUDING HIS
GOLDEN RULES FOR MONEY-MAKING.

ILLUSTRATED, AND BROUGHT UP TO 1889.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

“——a map of busy life,
Its fluctuations and its vast concerns.”
“And see what I can show in this
* * * * *
Strange, eventful history.”
—SHAKESPEARE.
The noblest art
Is that of making others happy.
—P. T. BARNUM.

BUFFALO:
THE COURIER COMPANY, PRINTERS.
1889

[*Fac-simile*]

Dedicated
to the
Whole Civilized World.
in General,
and to the
Universal Yankee Nation
in Particular.

[Fac-simile]

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average of mankind." Furthermore, the hamlet of P. T.'s youth seems to have had, for its size, an uncommon number of veteran jokesters, such as flocked to the little store he opened in 1828. In fact, the Ivy Island episode shows "how the whole neighborhood, as it were, would join in practising and perpetuating a joke." This kind of thing belonged to a phase of American society unblessed by the vicarious practical jokesmithing of the comic strip and the knockabout motion-picture. P. T. admitted that in planning and executing practical jokes he "enjoyed more hearty laughs . . . than from any one source in the world." "I have generally tried," he said, "to avoid giving offence, yet I have many times done so, and as often have I regretted this propensity, which was born in me, and will doubtless continue until 'dust returns to dust.'"

(P. S. — *It did.* George Conklin, "tamer of lions," at one time superintendent of animals for the Barnum & Bailey show, says that in a back office of the winter quarters in Bridgeport stood a packing-case with the mysterious black inscription: "Not to be opened until after the death of P. T. Barnum." Speculation was rife as to what the contents might be. "When, a few days after Mr. Barnum's death, the box was opened, it was found to be full of " — copies of the autobiography for "each of the old men round the show" ! . . . The sound of a faint chuckle must have drifted by from somewhere in

"The lucid interspace of world and world.")

In Barnum's practical jokes, Gamaliel Bradford appears to detect a major reason for listing P. T. in the category of "damaged souls," along with Aaron Burr and Benedict Arnold. He selects two for special disapproval. One had to do with the check-taker who, challenged to fight a duel at sunrise, "expected to be shot" and suffered in consequence. (His plight somewhat resembled that of Bob Acres, which for more than a

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century and a half has been found amusing by cultured readers and playgoers.) The evidence would indicate that this affair originated not with Barnum but with certain Cambridge undergraduates in a prankish mood. By midnight, Barnum relieved the check-taker's apprehensions. The other case relates to forged dispatches sent by Barnum to members of the Jenny Lind party. This happened on All Fools' Day, which, as we know, was formerly celebrated (as Hallowe'en was, and even still is) with horseplay and eruptions of slapstick humor. Barnum gives the account in a version quoted from the Nashville "Daily American," which thought the jest "laughable" and evidently supposed that contemporary readers would think the same. To-day we are likely to regard it, at this remove and in cold type, as of rather questionable taste — certainly so in the case of Le Grand Smith, who was informed that "his native village in Connecticut was in ashes, including his own homestead."

Practical joking, especially of the more robustious sort, is prone to run into bad taste. Shall we not, however, consider that probably most persons in the Jenny Lind suite were not unacquainted with Barnum and his "proclivity"? Shall we not, perhaps, allow a little for newspaper embellishment? Shall we not in fairness add that Le Grand Smith soon paid Barnum back for that "touch of 'April fool'," and that Barnum impartially reports how the company set forth armed to the teeth, fully expecting to be held up while crossing the Alleghanies?

One might as well come right out with it: Barnum was *not* by nature a sensitive plant, and his life-work and experience hardly tended to make him into one. He had the defects of his qualities. A certain insusceptibility is more likely than not to be associated with a temperament such as his. He filled more than four pages of his book by quoting from the "Tribune's" account of the burning of the American Museum — an account in which a "facetious reporter" endeavored to extract some-

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thing risible from the fate of the dumb animals trapped by the blaze. Barnum himself comments that the "half-consumed carcasses" of the two white whales "presented to my mind the worst specimens of baked and boiled fish that could be conceived of"; and then goes on to say: "All the New York newspapers made a great 'sensation' of the fire, and the full particulars were copied in journals throughout the country." In his story of Grizzly Adams, well-framed though it is, one is aware of a kind of callousness. But Benton, a friend of many years' standing, testifies: "His most audacious performances and jokes were unqualifiedly good-humored." He cannot convincingly be pictured as either malicious or deliberately heartless. Henry Bergh, who once had viewed him otherwise, said in 1885, "I regard Mr. Barnum as one of the most humane and kind-hearted men living." ". . . He had," writes Robert Sherwood, "a smile and a gentle sympathy that made friends all over the world."

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By the same token, why complain that Barnum lacked scientific interest in the creatures he exhibited? Can we be altogether positive about that? Are we to over-emphasize George Conklin's statement that once the Barnum of later days, when wandering through the animal house at winter quarters, "did not seem particularly interested?" After all, he was not a man of science but an exhibitor, and in his time exhibited many beasts.

We do know that he sent expeditions to Bermuda and the Gulf for specimens of marine life to be added to the aquarium in which he took pride; and he says that the tropical fish were "a great attraction to all classes, and especially to naturalists and others, who commended me for serving the ends of science as well as amusement." We know that as early as 1866 he had in

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mind the project of a zoölogical garden in New York — a project that was eventually realized through the New York Zoölogical Society but did not take shape until 1898. We know that at least as early he was discussing the establishment of a National Museum in New York, whereas the American Museum of Natural History was not incorporated until 1869, and the National Museum of the United States did not even have a real entity until the time of Spencer Baird, who became secretary of the Smithsonian in 1878. Barnum gave to Tufts College a building for its natural history museum, and by the first codicil to his will he made a bequest for that museum's enlargement, maintenance, and improvement. According to President Capen of Tufts, no less a person than Joseph Henry referred to the American Museum (which belonged to a period when museums under scientific auspices were not in the United States the accustomed things they now are) as "one of the most important educational institutions in this country." Spencer Baird wished to place in the United States National Museum a bust of Barnum among those of "men who have distinguished themselves for what they have done as promoters of the natural sciences." "Deprived in my own youth of rare educational advantages," wrote Barnum, "I have learned to appreciate their worth and to take solid delight in every evidence of greater enlightenment and progress."

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"... I do not find evidence that either the painting of Botticelli or a quiet walk in the fields afforded him any particular ecstasy." So writes Gamaliel Bradford; and though he may write smilingly, I cannot help thinking that this is *un peu trop fort* — or, as Barnum might have said, "coming it a bit strong." At any rate, we can learn that Barnum took pleasure in drives

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into the country, in boating, in excursions afield and picnics by the shore. With leisure and congenial companions — essentials for him — he found enjoyment in the natural beauties of Cuba or of our scenic West — particularly the Yosemite. He was charmed by the site of Waldemere, with its hickory grove, and the “broad Sound” stretching away before it. In 1869 he wrote that five months a year in the country seemed “all too short.” In the many details of the Jenny Lind tour, he mentions that at The Hermitage “we heard the wild mocking-birds singing in the trees.” He planted thousands of shade-trees along the streets of the town of which he was so fond, and he provided for it what is said to be the finest park on the Atlantic coast between New York and Boston.

As for Botticelli — well, here is Joseph Conrad (whom we should hardly pick as a damaged, or even a blockish, soul) writing to his friend Garnett, who was planning an Italian trip: “Don’t give all your time to the worship of Botticelli. Somebody should explode that superstition. But there, *you* know better.”

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The psychologizers have found it easy to pitch upon Barnum. They appear to be seeking, in a general way, to persuade us, that he was what Randolph of Roanoke said J. Q. Adams was: a combination of the Puritan and the blackleg. In the substance of this kind of thing, little is actually new.

From the fifth volume of the American edition of “Meyer’s *Universum*,” dated 1853, I have translated what follows:¹

“Barnum is the builder and proprietor of this marvellous house [the American Museum], in whose saloons and corridors are exhibited, with neither selection nor system, a hundred thou-

¹ The “*Universum*” was an album of excellent steel engravings, giving a pictorial survey of the world, with accompanying descriptive text.

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sand things, living and dead, from all the corners and ends of the earth — curiosities, objects of art, natural-history collections, giants, dwarfs, Egyptian mummies, skulls of famous men. Barnum is in his way a genius. In the Old World he would, of course, have landed in the galleys or in a house of correction, whereas in the New World he has made his fortune. A furrier by trade, he has at command a million of dollars; is the largest landed proprietor in Connecticut and Ohio; and is a partner in, or director of, several banks. His name figures in the lists of candidates at elections of governors and senators. The man presides over political organizations and agricultural societies. As a Mæcenas of the arts and sciences he receives the homage of poets.

“Before he discovered the real road to fortune, he tried many things. He was in turn soap-boiler, vinegar-manufacturer, compositor, printer, lottery-agent, stump-speaker, ship-broker — and in every case a failure. In a happy hour he struck upon the idea of purchasing from a bankrupt menagerie-owner some starving animals. The ladder of success had been found, and up it he mounted round by round until he was able to build his museum for \$120,000; employ fifty pens and bribe five hundred newspapers, to trumpet his humbug through the Union; daily to plaster with his placards and announcements 150,000 street-corners, omnibuses, steamboats, hotel parlors, and shop-walls; and to hitch first Tom Thumb, then Jenny Lind, to his triumphal car.

“In his choice of means, Barnum never had scruples. He sewed up a herd of buffalo in bison-skins; daubed red paint on a half-dozen young fellows, true children of New York; equipped them with feather-bonnets, quivers, and bows, like Indians from the Rockies; and invited the public to the spectacle of a bison-hunt. From horses' bones and skeletons of fishes he constructed gigantic, unidentified monsters of prehistoric

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ages. With 'reliable testimony' as to their genuineness and with 'authentic information' as to how and where they were found, he amazed the learned world and involved it in discussion. He transformed white youths into black Ethiopians. He ransacked a Hebrew junk-shop; and the rags and tatters, the old tobacco-boxes and worn-out canes, the rusty daggers and pistols, and so on, he exhibited in gilded cabinets, behind plate-glass, as relics of princes of the church and of heroic warriors. At the time of the Mexican War, he produced Santa-Anna's leg in a huge bottle of alcohol, although all that the Mexican general lost at the battle of Buena Vista was a piece of his wooden leg; his own limb he had lost before Vera Cruz, ten years earlier. When a newspaper hoax spreads through the Union — a report of a fabulous creature of the deep, mermaid or sea-serpent, you may be sure that in a few weeks this creature will be visible at Barnum's.

"The public hurries, runs, pays, gazes. Fooled, it either laughs at its own credulity or it grumbles, scolds, cries *Humbug!* But whether the public be in amiable mood or out of humor, Barnum maintains a stoical indifference, enjoys his golden harvest, laughs in his sleeve. With some new humbug, he causes the old to be forgotten. The Tom Thumb humbug (he had the dwarf appear in a little coach fashioned of tortoise-shell, ornamented with silver, and drawn by eight elephants) cost him \$60,000. The Jenny Lind humbug brought him \$200,000. On it he expended \$50,000 to set in motion all the composers, editors, authors, booksellers, music-dealers, hair-dressers, and milliners, and all the arts of puffery, that he might get the whole country to raving over his Swedish Nightingale. Now the man calls a million dollars his, and the sordidness and discredit attached to them are scarcely remembered. In the New World, Barnum passes for a 'big business man' — more fortunate than Cagliostro and Saint-Germain, who, with far greater talents,

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could not in the Old World do more than gain the name of being 'noted charlatans'."

So far as one may judge, this was not intended for satire, yet it contains but a few grains of literal fact. Already, in 1853, a mythology had formed around Barnum, and he had become a target for sassy remarks. One wonders why the anonymous author did not add that P. T. in younger days was under death-sentence in Canada for murder. This was at one time reported in Connecticut, and was no more distant from fact than is practically all of what I have quoted. Probably the anonymous author hadn't heard of it.

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In 1855 the "Life" came out, with Barnum's exposition of Barnum. Said John Fitch to the author, three years later: ". . . Upon reading your autobiography, I thought I perceived you tried to make yourself out something worse than you really were; for I discovered a pleasant spirit and a good heart under the rougher exterior in which you chose to present yourself to the public." Not everybody perceived what John Fitch perceived. On the contrary, some rose up to exclaim, "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant!" They did not discern, to adopt Benton's phrase, "the Pickwickian sense and the orientalism of statement." The "twinkling of the author's eye" escaped them.

The "S.-Peterburgskiya Viedomosti" published in 1856 an article entitled "Both Are Good," by Alexander Hertzen, Russian novelist and journalist, at that time living in London. Hertzen, who obviously had read the "Life" in a British edition and based upon it what he had to say of Barnum, pays his respects to the Horace of the Baronne Dudevant's novel of that name, and to P. T. *in propria persona*.

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“In England,” says Herten, “the Horaces are few, in America there are none” — but America has Barnum. “Barnum represents the material, practical side of our times — the prose of this century, its labor, its occupation; Horace, the poetical, artistic side”: such is in brief his thesis. Barnum had already come to be a symbol.

Herten continues:²

“From early childhood without means, Barnum grows up in a petty store, where he is surrounded by a perfect atmosphere of roguery. Before his eyes is continually going on a peaceful marauding war of small trade on its lowest scale, the storekeeper buying produce from the farmer and selling to him the products of the city. The slightest inattention on the part of the storekeeper, and he is fooled on weight or measure; the least heedlessness on the part of the farmer, and he is swindled. This commercial game of roguery engrosses everyone; everyone tries to be the first to say ‘Checkmate!’ to his adversary. When next they play, the other is trying with all his might to get square, not even considering it necessary to hide his intention.

“Barnum looks on this systematically organized thievery with the eyes of a clever, quick boy. The first result of his observation is his arrival at the conclusion that it is easy to gain a living by labor but one must not expect much from it. By speculation and trickery, on the other hand, everything is to be attained. This beautiful precept was his after a close survey of life and after trial of his luck in penny-lotteries and the sale of pastry-cakes and soft drinks. He also understood the great secret of the age of rhetoric, the age of effects and phrases, exhibitions and advertisements: he comprehended that the most important thing for the contemporary nominalist is *the poster!*

“Effect and phrase are the common instruments of Barnum

² For the extract here given, I am indebted to an as yet unpublished translation, by Elizabeth Gorin, of the Herten-Turgenev letters.

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as well as of Horace; but for Barnum it is only a means of gain. Once he has thoroughly cleaned you out, he leaves you in peace. Horace penetrates into your heart and soul, lies to you, and steals something from within you. Hence Horace becomes in the end a lawyer, *i.e.*, a professional rhetorician; and Barnum, who had amassed a fortune, becomes a philanthropist.

“The firm and steadfast belief of Barnum in human foolishness has been fully justified. He does not seek to hide his convictions — on the contrary, he naïvely tells you of his tricks in the very way in which a field-marshal might dilate upon his ingenious strategy. He viewed each individual and all mankind as but a means to his enriching himself. So have many others, but he acted with a greater moral force and in a more consecutive manner. He exhausted the means for his enrichment, and made a fortune — then he still further enriched himself by selling to the public the story of the way in which he had been fooling it. Here Barnum becomes the genius of his craft.

“Barnum incidentally found an old, broken-down, half-demented woman who was continually mumbling some incomprehensible nonsense. He conceives on the spot that it would be a good idea to exhibit the old woman as the nurse of George Washington. What is there to require lengthy reflection? Posters — and the thing was settled. He carried her from town to town, and wherever he went with her, everybody said it was a humbug, an imposition, and an absurdity; that Washington’s nurse would be, if living, at least one hundred and fifty years old. Everybody was in a hurry to satisfy his or her curiosity, and ran to see the old woman. One crowd left with loud laughter, and another entered the booth. Both are sure that it is all a humbug and nonsense, and meanwhile Barnum pockets thousands upon thousands.

“After he had everywhere exhibited his siren, Tom Thumb,

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the false nurse of George Washington, and the true Jenny Lind, Barnum shuffled into high honesty. He is the chairman of many charitable societies and gives fatherly advice to those who are just beginning to make a place for themselves in the world. From the middle-class viewpoint, the past does not affect a million in the safe. A million covers a multitude of sins.

“ Besides, Barnum was a moral man always, even in the beginning of his career. He halts in the middle of his book and tells his readers naïvely that though he was very often forced to take advantage of circumstances without being greatly squeamish as to the means, nevertheless he always took care to read his Bible; and no matter where he happened to be on a Sunday, he invariably went to church. He has not even forgotten to mention an occurrence that did great honor to his tenderness of heart: how he shed a tear while bidding his wife good-bye on board the ship that took him and Tom Thumb to England.” . . .

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Turgenev thought Herten's article “ very clever and keen ”; and so, indeed, it was — cleverer and keener than many a later article that has treated Barnum in similar vein. Moreover, its mockery of Barnum is but mild, restrained insinuation in comparison with most of the disparagement poured out upon him from that day to this. As Bradford puts it: “ Few men have been more scolded, more criticized, more lavishly and scurrilously ridiculed than he.” An old lady in Ioway said to his face: “ . . . We have read so much about you, and your museum, and your queer carryings-on, that we were not quite sure but you had horns and cloven feet.” The Chevalier Wyckoff informed Jenny Lind that Barnum was an adventurer who would not hesitate to place her in a cage and exhibit her through the country at twenty-five cents a head. At most of this, we may be sure,

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the Genial Showman was amused. Let critics rage and a small minority of the people imagine a vain thing! Aaron Turner had made, for Barnum's benefit, this apothegm: "Remember, all we need to insure success is notoriety" — and did not "every one" come "to see the circus managers who were in a habit of playing practical jokes upon each other"? When a woman visited his office with intent to blackmail him by forcing him into buying the copyright and entire edition of a pamphlet in which she said "some frightful things" about him, Barnum leaned back in his chair and "fairly roared." "My dear madam," said he, "you may say what you please about me or about my Museum; you may print a hundred thousand copies of a pamphlet stating that I stole the communion service, after the Tom Thumb wedding, from the Grace Church altar, or anything else you choose to write. Only have the kindness to say something about me, and then come to me and I will properly estimate the money value of your services to me as an advertising agent."

Yet even he registered a protest against the manner in which, at the time of the Jerome Clock company imbroglio, he was dealt with by "a few envious persons and misguided moralists," and by newspapers that had curried favor with him "when I had the means to make it an object for them to be on good terms with me." "I was taken to pieces, analyzed, put together again, kicked, 'pitched into,' tumbled about, preached to, preached about, and made to serve every purpose to which a sensation-loving world could put me." He was even twaddled at by preachers and religious editors "who were in want of fresh illustrations wherewith to point their morals." Nevertheless, he characteristically reflected: "Happily, there is always more wheat than there is chaff." Friends hitherto unknown emerged. Funds were offered "in unbounded quantity." General Thumb desired to be useful in his "small way."

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So was it always. "Did Barnum make a good speech?" asked P. T. of the ticket-seller who did not recognize him. The ticket-seller replied: "I did not hear it. I was out in the ticket-office. I guess it was pretty good, for I never heard so much laughing as there was all through his speech. But it makes no difference whether it was good or not, the people will go to see Barnum."

Yes — or Barnum's show. The Boston "Saturday Evening Gazette" printed some verses by an associate-editor, A. Wallace Thaxter, with this stanza:

"You humbugged us — that we have seen,
 We got our money's worth, old fellow,
And though you thought our *minds* were *green*,
 We never thought your *heart* was *yellow*.
We knew you liberal, generous, warm,
 Quick to assist a falling brother,
And with such virtues, what's the harm
 All memories of your faults to smother?"

The "New York Times" conceded: "Any man who gives as much for twenty-five cents as Mr. Barnum gives may be permitted a slight rein to his fancy." P. T. later observed, "In my capacity of circus proprietor I have been the recipient of many flattering and amusing amenities on the part of the church." As for the people, they flocked to his exhibitions and "saluted him as none but emperors are saluted."

So late as 1920, E. R. Dodge, a reader of the "New York Herald," wrote to that journal thus: "In discussing Jenny Lind's art you seemingly reflect on the name of the great showman, Phineas Taylor Barnum. I have seen a great many gibes in the press about that great and extraordinary personage, the purport of which is that he was a great humbug. It is time that myth was exposed. I speak from personal knowledge of Barnum's Museum at Ann street and Broadway. There must be

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persons living who remember it. . . . Folks are deluded who call Barnum a humbug." This is an authentic survival of *vox populi* of P. T.'s own day.

The psychologizers have taken this popular devotion as in itself a sign that Barnum was an enemy of the people. Barnum, admired by the generality of his countrymen, is, it seems, very largely to blame for American dollar-chasing, buncombe, "go-getting," and commercial quackery, little and big; for the high esteem in which America holds cheap smartness, low cunning, and the hankey-pankey of noisy publicity. In short, Barnum is in the way to become not only a symbol but a kind of national scapegoat, the Azazel of these States. This is an arrangement exceedingly favorable to numerous other reputations.

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"At regular periods," says Sherwood, "some one feels an impelling urge to bombard the memory of Barnum." . . . Sometimes one wonders whether an ill-turn has not also been done to "the greatest showman that ever lived" by the well-disposed but superficial minds that dwell exclusively upon what in one passage he terms his "eccentricities." It may not be wholly beside the mark to hint that two or three "humbugs" of his struggling period, one or two of his alleged sayings, and a few hackneyed anecdotes do not exhaustively depict P. T.

He afterward called the Fejee Mermaid a "special show of which, I confess, I am not proud." This Mermaid he did not originate nor own. It undoubtedly hailed from Japan. Barnum hired it from its owner, Moses Kimball of the Boston Museum, and by effective advertising of it he made it known. "I might," he said, "have published columns in the newspapers, presenting and praising the great collection of genuine specimens of natural history in my exhibition, and they would not have at-

You spoke yesterday or if you
might have plenty of space to put
in all that was necessary to my book.

If on examination you find room
you might put in the 7 lines on page
89 of the bound copy of my book
beginning

"It must not be supposed &c"

Also if you have room - put in
article from page 276 - beginning

"Public journals are generally"
and terminating with

"freely given for the sake."

P. J. B.

A BARNUM MEMORANDUM

[Fac-simile of the original MS.]

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tracted nearly so much attention as did the few paragraphs about the mermaid." . . . He regretted that "Some persons always *will* take things literally, and make no allowance for poetic license even in mermaids." And he announced that "On the 1st of April next [1855] (a most appropriate day), it will again make its appearance in my American Museum." It may perhaps be said that any American that in the mid-nineteenth century seriously believed in mermaids, deserved to be fooled in one fashion or another. "The Japanese contriver," declared Moncure Conway, "had rightly fathomed the mental shallows in which his sirens could float."

The Nondescript, or Woolly Horse, was bought by Barnum in Cincinnati, where it already was on exhibition. It was certainly a genuine curiosity, or "freak of nature," though just as certainly it was not discovered by Colonel Frémont. In Washington, "Old Bullion" Benton, Frémont's father-in-law (a man devoid of humor or the sense of it), caused the arrest of Barnum's agent for obtaining money under false pretences, but the case was dismissed. "After a few days of merriment," the horse was "permitted to retire to private life." It "caused yet more talk about me and my establishment" — and Barnum's object was attained. The "Joice Heth hoax" was not originally contrived by Barnum. He did not train Joice, nor did he forge the bill of sale that accompanied her. He purchased Joice (those were slavery days) from R. W. Lindsay in Philadelphia, where Lindsay was exhibiting her. His full version of the affair, as he gave it in 1855, may be found in the present edition. We may either accept it, or, candid though it appear, we may try to conjecture reasons for distrusting. Some persons suspected that Barnum's genuine angel fish were painted; suspected his genuine bearded lady and his genuine "white" elephant; suspected that Commodore Nutt was really Tom Thumb and that Lavinia Warren was really Commodore Nutt.

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To these reminders, a few others may be subjoined.

Barnum was a man of whom a friend could say, "He went out of his way to see the old and feeble and to help the poor." Once in Cleveland he sent elephants and other menagerie animals to give a performance before the window of an invalid child. He befriended Lindsay, who had fallen on evil days, though Lindsay had sought to injure him. "You know," Jenny Lind told him, "that you really give more than I do from the proceeds of every one of these charity concerts." A reading of his will and codicils affords a partial, but only a partial, idea of his beneficences. Let not the literal-minded lean too hard upon his deprecating words (1874): ". . . I am glad to have it understood that mine is usually a *profitable philanthropy*. I have no desire to be considered much of a philanthropist in any other sense." Most of us will come around to Bradford's conclusion: ". . . The philanthropy was there, just the same, and some men like the profit without it."

In all serious business matters, where the "frolicsome show spirit" and the bent toward practical joking had no play, Barnum was admittedly beyond reproach. (He did include the five acres of Ivy Island in the deal with Olmsted for the American Museum, but only because Olmsted, already well secured, at the last moment insisted on a piece of unencumbered real estate as additional security. Barnum's payments were made to Olmsted's satisfaction, and in less than a year he was in full possession of the Museum.) His dealings with Jenny Lind, for example, show him to have been in every way honorable; whereas, after she had left his management, Mademoiselle Lind complained to him, "People cheat me and swindle me very much."

When the Jerome Clock company trouble broke, Barnum assumed liabilities amounting to more than half a million dollars, and in a little over four years he had extinguished them. Prominent citizens bore witness that if not always *suaviter in modo*,

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he nevertheless was *fortiter in re*. Though not quite ingenuous (as he admits) as to Tom Thumb's right age or the nationality of the Lancashire Bell Ringers, he flatly refused to lend his name to land frauds or wild-cat stock schemes. His showmen partners had no word against his business integrity and fairness, nor had those that were associated with him in his real-estate and other transactions.

As a mayor, he was patently too good for the town over which he presided. As a legislator, he was hard-working, high-minded, progressive, and courageous. Connecticut had a not very creditable record with respect to black folk. In 1831 New Haven fiercely and successfully opposed the establishment within its borders of a negro college that free Northern negroes were planning. In 1833-1834 Canterbury had shabbily and meanly persecuted Prudence Crandall because she was conducting a school for negro girls. In 1833 the Assembly passed the notorious "Black Law." Barnum was a leader in having the suffrage extended to the negro under the State constitution and in having stricken from that document the word "white" — inserted, he said, by "Northern lick-spittlers." "No other New England State so demeaned herself," he added. He also successfully led the opposition to the railway lobby; and forthwith, according to him, the New York and New Haven road refused to allow newsboys on its trains to peddle the autobiography! Root quotes a Connecticut paper as saying that the people of the State were "under great obligations" to Barnum "for breaking down the railroad combinations which have so long infested the Legislature."

When a candidate (1867) for the office of representative in the Fortieth Congress, he failed of election. "Perhaps," surmises Bradford, "the voters did not wholly relish being represented by a man whom the world at large could not be persuaded to take seriously." True enough, the American electorate

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has shown preference for public men that face it with owlsh portentousness and do their laughing behind its back. In this instance, however, political conditions within the district and throughout the State were an important predisposing cause; and Barnum glances at a possible other reason, concluding that "if I had been defeated by fraud, mine was the real success." However this was, the fact remained that in politics (which, he says, were "always distasteful" to him) the Great Illusionist had met with disillusion. "I possess naturally," he remarks, "too much independence of mind, and too strong a determination to do what I believe to be right, regardless of party expediency, to make a lithe and oily politician. To be called on to favor applications from office-seekers, without regard to their merits, and to do the dirty work too often demanded by political parties; to be "all things to all men" though not in the apostolic sense; to shake hands with those whom I despised, and to kiss the dirty babies of those whose votes were courted, were political requirements which I felt I could never acceptably fulfil."

As for Barnum's religion (if one comes to that), even Bradford is sure that it was "sincere and genuine at bottom." In youth, Barnum adopted the Universalist faith — the faith of Phineas Taylor. The pages of the "Herald of Freedom" amply reveal the extent and intensity of his revolt against the traditional Calvinism of his New England environment. As a lad, he had a liking for "heretics," such as the Rev. Richard Dey. His pamphlet "Why I Am a Universalist," *confessio laici*, has been praised for both matter and manner. Mrs. Barnum's "Last Chapter," which is reprinted in the Appendix to the present edition, contributes to one's understanding of this phase of her husband's character.

Barnum was interested in various social reforms, particularly in the cause of temperance. Himself a practising abstainer, he

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wrote a brochure, "The Liquor Business; Its Effects upon the Minds, Morals, and Pockets of Our People," and he lectured enthusiastically on temperance. In that cause he asserted a deeper concern than in "the largest audience ever assembled under canvas." "In the course of my life I have," he said, "written much for newspapers, on various subjects, and always with earnestness, but in none of these have I felt so deep an interest as in that of the temperance reform." It goes without saying that Barnum's temperance fervor and still more his religion have afforded the ironists some rather obvious diversion.

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We have had the man-in-the-street's Barnum — the Barnum that reiterated the self-evident truth that the American public likes to be humbugged; the Barnum that is alleged to have said in a speech, "There's a sucker born every minute" (Werner is decidedly vague about this, and Sherwood flatly denies that P. T. ever said it). "Barnum was right," cackles the man-in-the-street — and that is all he knows of Barnum, save, possibly, for highly inaccurate renderings of stock anecdotes. We have had the Barnum of the psychologizers and ironists — a sort of Jekyll-Hyde with comic relief. We have had a musical-comedy Barnum, and even a symphonic-poem Barnum. Meanwhile, the autobiographic Barnum (the Barnum that must be the cardinal source of knowledge of Barnum — yea, for the psychologizers, too, who glean so cleverly between the lines) has been long out of print. With the dispersal of old-fashioned libraries, copies have straggled Proteanly into the second-hand shops, where they have been known of the browser and the stray collector. To the general reader, this Barnum has been something largely of hearsay. Yet the book was once among the most popular American books of all time; and G. S. Seymour (in his "Adventures

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with Books and Autographs ") has declared: "There are some authors that positively cannot be ignored. No really bookful library is complete, for instance, without its copy of the *Autobiography* of P. T. Barnum." "Copies," he might well have said; for no one of the original copies would give anything like the full scope of the narrative.

In the present edition the general reader will, I think, have the autobiographic Barnum in all essential fulness. Here he is in his almost overwhelming buoyancy of spirits. When, in order that he may keep a lecture engagement, the Toledo and Wabash sends him from Cleveland to Fort Wayne in a caboose, he is not merely content — no, he exults thus in a telegraphic message to the superintendent: "The springs of the caboose are softer than down; I am as happy as a clam at high water; I am being carried towards Fort Wayne in a style never surpassed by Caesar's triumphal march into Rome." Here are his gibes and gambols — his "flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar." Here he is to be found in "confessional mood" — explaining, minimizing, justifying.

Here are his gift for showmanship, and his instinct for publicity. Anecdote says that Alcibiades, having paid a large sum for a fine dog, cut off the dog's tail, remarking: "This I do that the Athenians may talk about it, and not concern themselves with other acts of mine." Barnum would have understood the tail-cropping, but not such a reason for it. "The great showman" — I draw again upon Benton — "unaffectedly enjoyed being known from the very beginning of his celebrity; and when he found his celebrity was a tremendous factor in his success, he did everything that he could think of to extend the exploitation of his name."

Here are faults that the psychologizers have

"Set in a note-book, learn'd, and conn'd by rote."

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For example, his illimitable complacency; his cosmic vanity; his occasional callousness; his vulgarity — but why continue? Here the general reader will doubtless encounter all these, but, unless I greatly err, is likely to encounter plenty of other and quite different things. Whoso touches this book, touches a human being — touches a career of a peculiarly rich, varied, and entertaining pattern. This Barnum was one who, in Johnson's words of Dr. Meade, "lived more in the broad sunshine of life than almost any man."

Incidentally, these pages give glimpses of a bygone Connecticut — a homespun Connecticut in which existed the whipping-post and imprisonment for debt. You will see something of an elder New York: a New York in which folk wondered whether the new Astor House would be a profitable venture; in which the "Boz Ball" was given at the Park Theatre to honor the young Charles Dickens; whose fashionable residential section was the neighborhood of St. John's Park; whose "Broadway Journal" was edited by Edgar Poe; and of whose World's Fair one P. T. Barnum wrote that the remoteness of the location — Reservoir Square, four miles from the City Hall — was of itself enough to kill the enterprise! You will travel the open road with a show troupe; will listen to "the most glorious voice the world has ever heard"; will come upon divers notabilities of yesteryear — some of them remembered still, even in this self-sufficient and oblivious age. You will mingle with giants and midgets; make the acquaintance of jugglers, albinos, famed elephants, Red Indians, white whales; wander amid the marvels of the Seven Saloons of Wonder; watch the racers of the Roman Hippodrome go thundering down the stretch, then safely take the turn; get lost in the tented acres of the Greatest Show on Earth.

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This random ballyhoo draws to its end. The performance is about to begin. See the Big Show — the *Big Show* — the BIG SHOW! Lay-dees and Gen-til-mun: I take great pleasure in introducing to you the Only Original Phineas Taylor Barnum, who will now personally instruct and amuse you in his own inimitable manner.

[The circus band, with calliope under full head of steam, swings into a Grand March.]

STRUGGLES AND TRIUMPHS:

OR,

THE LIFE OF

P. T. BARNUM

INTRODUCTORY



PHINEAS TAYLOR

WAS my maternal grandfather. I was his first grandchild, and it was suggested that I should perpetuate his honored name. My delighted ancestor confirmed the choice, and handed to my mother a gift-deed, in my behalf, of five acres of land, be the same more or less, situated in that part of the parish of Bethel, town of Danbury, county of Fairfield, State of Connecticut, known as "Plum Trees"; said tract of land being designated "Ivy Island."

INTRODUCTORY

I think I can remember when I was not more than two years old, and the first person I recollect having seen, was my grandfather. As I was his pet, and spent probably the larger half of my waking hours in his arms, during the first six years of my life, my good mother estimates that the amount of lump sugar which I swallowed from his hands, during that period, could not have been less than two barrels.

My grandfather was decidedly a wag. He was a practical joker. He would go farther, wait longer, work harder, and contrive deeper, to carry out a practical joke, than for anything else under heaven. In this one particular, as well as in many others, I am almost sorry to say I am his counterpart; for although nothing that I can conceive of delights me so much as playing off one of those dangerous things, and although I have enjoyed more hearty laughs in planning and executing them, than from any one source in the world, and have generally tried to avoid giving offence, yet I have many times done so, and as often have I regretted this propensity, which was born in me, and will doubtless continue until "dust returns to dust."

. . .

My paternal grandfather was Captain Ephraim Barnum, of Bethel — a captain in the militia in the Revolutionary War. His son Philo was my father. He too was of a lively turn of mind, and relished a joke better than the average of mankind. These historical facts I state as some palliation for my own inclination that way. "What is bred in the bone," etc.

Born — Married — Died. Most of my ancestors have passed the third state. I hope, through the grace of God, to meet them all in a better world, where "they neither marry nor are given in marriage" and where "death is swallowed up in victory."

CHAPTER I

MY EARLY HISTORY

First Appearance — School Experience — Pennies and Sixpennies — Fish out of Water — First Visit to New York — Adventures in the City — Speculation in Oranges — Guns and Torpedoes — Funds Running Low — My First Swop — Vast Supplies — Corporation Morals — End of the Bargain.

My first appearance upon this stage was on the 5th day of July, Anno Domini 1810. Independence Day had gone by, the cannons had ceased to thunder forth their remembrances of our National Anniversary, the smoke had all cleared away, the drums had finished their rattle, and when peace and quiet were restored, I made my *début*.

This propensity of keeping out of harm's way has always stuck by me. I have often thought that were I forced to go to war, the first arms that I should examine would be my legs. I should scarcely fulfil the plan of the Yankee soldier who fired a few stray shots at the enemy on his own hook, and then departed, singing,

"He that fights and runs away,
May live to fight another day."

I am decidedly a man of peace, and the first three words of the first line would never correctly apply to me if it was possible for me to appropriate the three words which follow them.

I am not aware that my advent created any peculiar commotion in the village, though my good mother declares that I made a great deal of noise the first hour I saw the light, and that she has never been able to discover any cessation since.

I must pass by the first seven years of my life — during which my grandfather crammed me with sugar and loaded me with pennies to buy raisins and candies, which he always instructed

me to solicit from the store-keeper at the "lowest cash price" — and proceed to talk of later events.

I commenced going to school at the age of about six years. The first date which I recollect inscribing upon my writing-book, was 1818. A school-house in those days was a thing to be dreaded — a schoolmaster, a kind of being to make the children tremble. My first school-teacher was a Mr. Camp, the second Mr. Zerah Judson, the third a Mr. Curtiss from Newtown, the fourth Dr. Orris T. Taylor, and afterwards my uncle Alanson Taylor, etc. In the summers Miss Hannah Starr, an excellent teacher, of whom I was an especial favorite, and for whom I have ever entertained the highest respect, was our school-mistress. The first three male teachers used the ferule prodigiously, and a dark dungeon which was built in the house was tenanted nearly all the time during school hours by some unlucky juvenile, frequently under eight years of age, who had incurred the displeasure of the "one-man power."

I was generally accounted a pretty apt scholar, and as I increased in years, there were but two or three in school who were considered my superiors. In arithmetic I was unusually quick, and I recollect, at the age of twelve years, being called out of bed one night by my teacher, who had laid a small wager with a neighbor that I could figure up and give the correct number of feet in a load of wood in five minutes. The neighbor stated the dimensions, and as I had no slate in the house I marked them on the stove pipe, and thereon also figured my calculations, and gave the result in less than two minutes, to the great delight of my teacher, my mother, and myself, and to the no small astonishment of our incredulous neighbor. My father was a tailor, a farmer, and sometimes a tavern-keeper; so I was often kept out of school and never had any "advantages" except at the common district school, and one summer at the "Academy" in Danbury, a distance of three miles, which I marched and countermarched six times per week.

Like most farmers' boys, I was obliged to drive and fetch the cows, carry in firewood, shell corn, weed beets and cab-

A SILVER DOLLAR

bages, and, as I grew larger, I rode horse for ploughing, turned and raked hay and in due time handled "the shovel and the hoe," as well as the plough; but I never really liked to work.

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My organ of acquisitiveness must be large, or else my parents commenced its cultivation at an early period. Before I was five years of age I began to accumulate pennies and sixpennies. At the age of six years my grandfather informed me that all my little pieces of coin amounted to one dollar, and if I would go with him and take my money, he would show me something worth having. Placing all my wealth in a pocket-handkerchief which was closely wound up and firmly grasped, I started with my grandfather. He took me to the village tavern, then kept by Mr. Stiles Wakelee, and approaching the landlord, he said, "Here, Mr. Wakelee, is the richest boy in this part of the country. He has a dollar in cash. I wish you to take his change and give him a silver dollar for it."

The complaisant landlord took my deposits and presently handed me a silver dollar.

Never have I seen the time (nor shall I ever again) when I felt so rich, so absolutely independent of all the world, as I did when I looked at that monstrous big silver dollar, and felt that it was all my own. Talk of "cart wheels," there was never one half so large as that dollar looked to me. I believed, without the slightest reservation, that this entire earth and all its contents could be purchased by that wonderful piece of bullion, and that it would be a bad bargain at that.

But my dollar did not long remain alone. My mother taught me that I should still save my pennies, and I did so. As I grew larger, my grandfather paid me ten cents per day for riding the horse which preceded the ox-team in ploughing, and I hit upon various expedients for adding to my pile. On "training days," instead of spending money, I was earning it in the vocation of a peddler. My stock in trade consisted of a gallon of molasses,

boiled down and worked into molasses candy, called in those times "cookania," and I usually found myself a dollar richer at the end of "training" than I was at the commencement. As I always had a remarkable taste for speculation, my holiday stock soon increased, and comprised "ginger-bread," cookies, sugar candies, and cherry rum. The latter article consisted of a demijohn of New England rum, in which was put a quantity of wild cherries, and I believe a little sugar. I soon learned that the soldiers were good cherry-rum customers, and no sooner did I hear the words "halt," "ground arms," than I approached the "trainers" with my decanter and wine-glass. In a few years I should have been a second Cræsus in wealth, had not my father considerably allowed me to purchase my own clothing. This arrangement kept my pile reduced to a moderate size. Always looking out for the main chance, however, I had sheep of my own, a calf of which I was the sole proprietor, and other individual property which made me feel, at twelve years of age, that I was quite a man of substance.

I felt at the same time that I had not reached my proper sphere. The farm was no place for me. I always disliked work. Head-work I was excessively fond of. I was always ready to concoct fun, or lay plans for money-making, but hand-work was decidedly not in my line. My father insisted that I could hoe and plough and dig in the garden as well as anybody else, but I generally contrived to shirk the work altogether, or by slighting it, get through with the day's work.

I was not quite twelve years of age when I visited the commercial metropolis for the first time. It happened as follows: My father, as before stated, kept the village tavern. Late one afternoon in January, 1822, Mr. Daniel Brown, of Southbury, Ct., arrived at our house with a drove of fat cattle which he was taking to New York for sale. The stock were put into our large barnyard, the horses ridden by himself and assistant were stabled, and Mr. Brown having partaken of a warm supper, drew off his boots, put on his slippers, and sat down by the fire to spend the evening comfortably.

THE ROAD TO "YORK"

I looked upon him as a great man, for he had been to "York," and to "go to York" in those days was thought quite as much of as to go to Europe is now. I listened to the relation of his adventures in city and country, my interest in the man continually increasing. At last I heard him say to my father, that he expected to buy many more cattle in Ridgefield, and at other points on his way to the city, and he would be glad to hire a boy who was light of foot, to run along with him and assist in driving the cattle. I immediately besought my father (like a modern office-seeker) to intercede for me, and if possible procure me the coveted situation. He did so. Consultation with my mother resulted in her consent, and it was immediately arranged that I should visit New York. I was told to retire at once, so as to be ready to start with the drove of cattle at daylight in the morning. I went to bed, but not to sleep. Visions of all sorts haunted my imagination. A new world was about to be opened to me. I slept an hour or two towards morning, dreaming of the great city with streets paved with gold, and many castles — in the air.

At daylight I was aroused, took a few mouthfuls of breakfast, and started off on foot in the midst of a heavy snow-storm, to help drive the cattle. Before reaching Ridgefield, Mr. Brown put me on his horse to gallop after a wandering ox; the horse fell, rolled upon my foot, and sprained my ankle. I suffered intensely, but dared not complain lest my employer should contrive some way to send me back, for I was not yet ten miles from home. He very considerably allowed me to ride behind him on the horse, and that night the landlady of the hotel where we stopped bathed my ankle, which was considerably swollen. The next day it was a trifle better, but as I continued to limp, Mr. Brown permitted me to ride most of the time.

In three or four days we reached the city of New York, and put up at the Bull's Head tavern,¹ kept, I think, by Mr. Givens.

¹ "But there was a butcher by the name of Astor — Henry Astor, his name was — who got into the habit, whenever a drover was reported as coming

The drover would be busy a week selling his cattle, and then I was to return home with him in a sleigh.

That was a great week for me. My mother gave me a dollar before I left home, and I never expected to see the end of it. I supposed it would supply my every wish, and yet leave unknown quantities of small change on hand. The first outlay I made was for oranges. I was very fond of this fruit, and had often wished I could have as many as I could eat. I entered a confectionery store and inquired the price of oranges. "Four pence apiece," was the reply.

Now, "four pence" in Connecticut is six cents,² and I supposed it was the same the world over. Profiting by my experience in "beating down" the price, and not doubting Franklin's proverb that "a penny saved is two pence earned," I informed the lady that "I considered four pence apiece too dear, but I would give her ten cents for two."

The feminine shopkeeper hesitated for a moment, but finally said that seeing it was me, and as it was probably my first visit to New York, she would let me have the two oranges for ten cents, but she should expect me to trade with her whenever I wanted any thing in her line. I thanked her, and took the oranges. I thought it was very liberal in her to make such a generous deduction from the price of her fruit, little dreaming that, owing to the difference in currency, I had paid her two cents more than she asked.

into town, of leaving his brother butchers tippling at the Bowery 'Bull's Head,' skip out through the back door of the tavern, mount his horse, ride up the Bowery Road, and meet the drove before it got down to where the other butchers were waiting. Astor would stop the drove and pick out the prime beeves before any one else had a chance at them. By and by the other butchers got on to his trick and also began to ride up to the Bowery to meet the herds. In this way a new 'Bull's Head' was established, way out on the Boston Road, where Twenty-sixth Street now is. (The 'Boston Road' is now Third Avenue.) By my time this new 'Bull's Head' had got to be the cattle market, the drovers' headquarters for the city." — White: "The Book of Daniel Drew," pp. 42-43. [Ed.]

² This was a survival of an old New England usage. In the days when Spanish coinage was in circulation, "fourpence" meant commonly the Spanish half-real, the value of which was six and one-quarter cents. [Ed.]



BARNUM'S BIRTHPLACE
From the 1869 "Struggles and Triumphs."

ALARUMS AT THE INN

Soon dispatching my two oranges, I purchased two more, and had eighty cents left. This seemed to me sufficient for all mortal wants. I then bought for thirty-one cents a little gun, which would "go off" and send a stick some distance across the room. I intended to astonish my schoolmates with the gun when I got home, for it astonished me considerably, as I had never seen any thing of the kind before. I went into the bar-room of our hotel, and began to amuse myself with the extraordinary implement. The bar-room was crowded with customers, and shooting at random, the arrow grazed one man's nose and passed on, hitting the barkeeper in the eye. Smarting under the pain it occasioned, the latter came in front of his counter, caught me by the collar, shook me sternly, boxed my ears till my head rung, and told me to put that gun out of the way or he would throw it into the stove. I felt considerably injured in my feelings, and sneaking slyly up stairs placed the precious treasure under my pillow.

Visiting the toy shop again, the good woman instructed me in the mystery of torpedoes. She threw one with considerable force on the floor, and it exploded, greatly to my delight. Would not these astonish our school-boys? I bought six cents' worth for that purpose, but could not wait to use them at home. As the guests at the hotel were passing in to dinner, and supposing that they had never seen any thing in the torpedo line and would be delighted to do so, I could not refrain from giving them the opportunity. So taking two from my pocket and throwing them with all my strength against the side of the hall through which the crowd was passing, a loud double-report followed, much to the surprise and annoyance of the guests. The landlord came rushing out in a high state of excitement, and discovering the culprit he stretched me upon the floor at a single blow with his open hand.

"There, you little greenhorn," he exclaimed, "see if that will teach you better than to explode your infernal crackers in my house again!"

It did. I was perfectly taught in a single lesson; went up

stairs and deposited the balance of the torpedoes with my gun. I ate no dinner that day. My dignity had been insulted and my appetite had vanished. I was humbled. I felt forlorn and forsaken. I however had one resource. It was the toy shop. I visited it again, bought a watch, a breast-pin, and a top. I was still a rich man. I had eleven cents left. I went to bed and dreamed of all my possessions.

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, I visited the toy shop again to "look around," and perceived many things which I had not noticed the day previously. Presently I saw a beautiful knife with two blades, besides a gimlet and corkscrew! This was a novelty. The most useful article in existence, beyond all doubt. I must possess it. My father would be delighted, for it was a carpenter shop in miniature, and was too valuable an article to leave behind me. Wouldn't old Bethel be astonished! But what was the price of this combination of all that was useful and ornamental? Only thirty-one cents. Alas, I had only eleven! I learned to my astonishment that my funds were exhausted. But have the knife I must, and so I proposed to my kind friend, the shop woman, that she should receive back the top and breast-pin at a slight deduction from what I had paid for them, and then taking my eleven cents, should let me have the knife. The kind creature consented, and thus I made my first "swop." Presently I discovered some molasses candy. It was whiter and nicer than any I had ever seen before. I must have some. So I asked the lady to take back the watch at a slight discount, and give me the worth of it in molasses candy. She did so. It was delicious. I had never tasted any thing so nice — and before night I had resigned my gun into her possession and swallowed its value in molasses candy. The next morning I swallowed all my torpedoes in the same shape, and in the course of the day even my knife followed in the sweet footsteps of its illustrious predecessors. Molasses candy was the rock on which I split. My money was all gone — my notions all swopped for it — and yet, like *Oliver Twist*, I cried for "more."

IN BEAR MARKET

The good woman had a son of about my size. I had no particular use for my two pocket-handkerchiefs. Her boy could use them, and I gladly accepted her proposal to trade them for four sticks of molasses candy. I had an extra pair of stockings which I was sure I should never need, and they went for five more rolls of molasses candy!

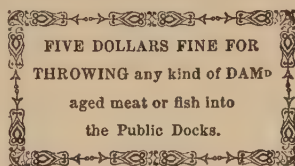
When thus divested of all I possessed, I became resigned to my fate, and, turning my attention to some other source of excitement, I made the acquaintance of a young gentleman from Connecticut. He was about twenty years of age, had been in New York once before, "knew the ropes," and proposed to show me the city. I gladly accompanied him, and saw many sights that day which astonished me beyond measure. He took me to "Bear Market," as it was then called — "Washington Market," as it is now designated. I was greatly surprised at the immense quantities of meat there displayed.

"What under heaven do they expect to do with all this meat?" I asked my companion with much curiosity.

"They expect to sell it, of course," he said.

"They'll get sucked in then," I replied exultingly, for I felt assured that it would never be possible to consume all that beef before doomsday. It was probably all masticated within the next twenty-four hours, but to a raw boy from the country such a thing would seem incredible. It was equally incredible to "Uncle Sam" Taylor, several years afterwards. Rising early one morning, the old gentleman roused his companions, saying, "Let us look in upon Fulton Market. I rather guess there will be a grand show of beef. I have already seen three cart-loads go by!"

I think I shall never forget an inscription which I saw painted on a small square piece of board and fastened to a post on the dock at the rear of the market. It was a corporation warning, and read as here presented.



I was astonished at the profanity of the public authorities,

and wondered why they could not have said simply "aged meat or fish," without prefixing the offensive adjective. I called the attention of my friend to the deplorable state of public morals as exhibited on their public "sign," when he explained that some wicked wag, not having the fear of the city aldermen before his eyes, had interpolated the little "D" and thus made the word "damaged" express its own true meaning, though in an unnecessarily strong and objectionable manner.

My friend also took me out of town to see the State Prison,³ paid my way in, and witnessed my astonishment at seeing so many wicked convicts dressed in the striped prison suit, and especially to see about two hundred shoe-makers turn their faces to the door when we entered, with as much precision as if they had been automaton all moved by a single wire. I also saw a large windmill the same day, which was the first time I had ever seen the like.

My week was soon up. Mr. Brown took me into his one-horse sleigh immediately after dinner, drove as far as Sawpitts,⁴ now called Port Chester, stopped over night, started early the next morning, and arrived at Bethel the same evening.

I had a thousand questions to answer, and found my brothers and sisters much disappointed that I had brought them none of the fruits of my dollar. My mother examined my wardrobe, and finding it two pocket-handkerchiefs and one pair of stockings short, I was whipped and sent to bed. Thus terminated my first visit to New York.

I was however for a long time quite a lion among the school-boys, for I had "been to York" and seen with my own eyes many wonders which they had only "heard tell of."

³ This was then on the west side of the island, near the Christopher-street wharf, on land now bounded by Perry, Washington, Christopher, and West streets. [Ed.]

⁴ An erroneous spelling common in those days. Until 1837, Port Chester (Westchester county, New York) was known as Saw Pit or Sawpits—probably through the boat-building carried on there. A saw-pit was a place arranged for the hand-sawing of timber by two men, one above and the other below. [Ed.]

CHAPTER II

CLERK IN A STORE—ANECDOTES

Clerk in a Store — An Eye to Business — Jokers' Exchange — My Inheritance — Ivy Island — Anticipations — An Exploring Expedition — Among the Bogs — A Hornets' Nest — The Promised Land — Vanished Dreams — Razor-Strops — Diamond Cut Diamond — Tricks of Trade.

MY aversion to hand-work, on the farm or otherwise, continued to be manifested in various ways, all of which was generally set down to the score of laziness. I believe, indeed, I had the reputation of being the laziest boy in town, probably because I was always busy at head-work to evade the sentence of gaining bread by the sweat of the brow. In sheer despair of making anything better of me, my father concluded to try me as a merchant. He had previously erected a suitable building in Bethel, and taking Mr. Hiram Weed as a partner, they purchased a stock of dry goods, groceries, hardware, and a thousand other "notions"; and I was duly installed as clerk in a country store.

Like many greenhorns before me, this was the height of my ambition. I felt that it was a great condescension on my part to enter into conversation with common boys who had to work for a living. I strutted behind the counter with a pen back of my ear, was wonderfully polite to ladies, assumed a wise look when entering charges upon the day-book, was astonishingly active in waiting upon customers, whether in weighing ten-penny nails, starch, indigo, or saleratus, or drawing New England rum or West India molasses.

Ours was a cash, credit, and barter store; and I drove many a sharp trade with old women who paid for their purchases in butter, eggs, beeswax, feathers, and rags, and with men who ex-

changed for our commodities, hats, axe-helves, oats, corn, buckwheat, hickory-nuts, and other commodities. It was something of a drawback upon my dignity that I was compelled to sweep the store, take down the window-shutters, and make the fire; nevertheless the thought of being a "merchant" fully compensated me for all such menial duties.

My propensities for money-making continued active as ever, and I asked and obtained the privilege of purchasing candies on my own account, to sell to the juvenile portion of our customers. I received a small salary for my services (my father as usual stipulating that I should clothe myself) and I intended to be faithful to my employers; but I have found, all through life, that wherever there are conflicting interests, men are very apt to think of self first, and so I fear it was with me, — for I well remember spending much time in urging indulgent mothers to buy candies for their darling children, when other customers were waiting to be served with more substantial articles of merchandise.

A country store in the evening, or upon a wet day, is a miserably dull place, so far as trade is concerned. Upon such occasions therefore I had little to do, and I will explain why the time did not hang unpleasantly upon my hands.

In nearly every New England village, at the time of which I write, there could be found from six to twenty social, jolly, story-telling, joke-playing wags and wits, regular originals, who would get together at the tavern or store, and spend their evenings and stormy afternoons in relating anecdotes, describing their various adventures, playing off practical jokes upon each other, and engaging in every project out of which a little fun could be extracted by village wits whose ideas were usually sharpened at brief intervals by a "treat," otherwise known as a glass of Santa Cruz rum, old Holland gin, or Jamaica spirits.

Bethel was not an exception to this state of things. In fact no place of its size could boast more original geniuses in the way of joking and story-telling than my native village. As before stated, my grandfather, Phineas Taylor, was one of the sort.

THE RICHEST CHILD IN TOWN

His near neighbor, Benjamin Hoyt, or "Esquire" Hoyt, as he was called, on account of being a justice of the peace, was one of the most inveterate story-tellers I ever knew. He could relate an anecdote with better effect than any man I have ever seen. He would generally profess to know all the parties in the story which he related, and however comic it might be, he would preserve the most rigid seriousness of countenance until its *dénouement*, when he would break forth into a hearty haw! haw! which of itself would throw his hearers into convulsions of laughter.

Luckily or unluckily, our store was the resort of all these wits, and many is the day and evening that I have hung with delight upon their stories, and many the night that I have kept the store open until eleven o'clock, in order to listen to the last anecdotes of the two jokers who had remained long after their companions had gone to rest.

Inheriting a vital love of fun and an aptness for practical jokes, all that was said and done by these village wags was not only watched with the most intense pleasure by myself, but was also noted upon the tablets of a most retentive memory, whence I can now extract them without losing scarcely a word. Some of these specimens I will present to the reader hereafter. I will however here advert to a circumstance which will show how the whole neighborhood, as it were, would join in practising and perpetuating a joke.

It will be remembered that my grandfather, a few days after my birth, in consideration of my taking his name, presented me with a tract of land called "Ivy Island." I was not four years of age before my grandfather informed me, with much seriousness, that I was a landowner; that he had given me a valuable farm on account of my name, etc.; and I am certain that not a week elapsed, from that period till I was twelve years of age, that I did not hear of this precious patrimony. My grandfather never spoke of me in my presence, either to a neighbor or stranger, without saying that I was the richest child in town, because I owned all "Ivy Island," the most valuable farm in

Connecticut. My mother often reminded me of my immense possessions, and my father occasionally asked me if I would not support the family when I came in possession of my property. I frequently assured my father, in the most perfect good faith, that he need give himself no uneasiness upon that score, for I would see that all the family wants were bountifully supplied when I attained my majority and received my estate. Our neighbors, too, reminded me a dozen times a day, that they feared I would refuse to play with their children, because I had inherited such immense wealth, while they had nothing of the sort.

These continual allusions to "Ivy Island" for six or eight years, I fear excited my pride, and I know that the prospect made me wish that the slow-moving wheels of time would attain a rapidity which would hurry up that twenty-first birthday, and thus enable me to become the nabob which my grandfather's generous foresight had cut me out for. How often, too, did I promise my playmates, when they rendered me a kind action, that when I became of age they should have a slice of "Ivy Island" that would make them rich for life! I sincerely intended to fulfil these promises to the letter. But, alas for the mutability of human affairs! an issue was at hand which I little expected, and one which was destined to effect a serious change in my hopes and aspirations.

One summer (I think it was 1822, at which period I was twelve years old) I asked my father's permission to visit "Ivy Island." He promised I should do so in a few days, as we should be getting hay in that vicinity. I scarcely slept for three nights, so great was my joy to think that, like Moses of old, I should be permitted to look upon the promised land. The visions of wealth which had so long haunted me in relation to that valuable locality now became intensified, and I not only felt that it must be a land flowing with milk and honey, but caverns of emeralds, diamonds, and other precious stones, as well as mines of silver and gold, opened vividly to my mind's eye.

The wished-for morning at length arrived, and my father in-

formed me that we were to mow in the meadow adjoining "Ivy Island" and that I might visit it with our hired man during "nooning." My grandfather kindly reminded me that when I came to look upon the precious spot, I was to remember that I was indebted to his bounty, and that if I had not been named "Phineas" I never could have been the proprietor of "Ivy Island." My mother, too, had to put in a word.

"Now, Taylor," said she, "don't become so excited when you see your property as to let your joy make you sick, for remember, rich as you are, that it will be nine years before you can come into possession of your fortune." I promised to be calm and reasonable.

"If you visit Ivy Island," she continued, "you will lose your rest at noon, and you will feel tired, after turning hay all the forenoon. Had you not better lie under the trees and rest at 'nooning,' and visit Ivy Island at some other time?"

"No, my dear mother," I replied, "I don't care for nooning, I shall not feel tired, and I am so anxious to step upon my property, that I cannot wait any longer."

"Well, go," said my mother; "but don't feel above speaking to your brothers and sisters when you return."

I felt that this injunction was not altogether superfluous, for I already began to feel that it was rather degrading for me to labor as hard as those who had no estate settled upon them.

We went to work in our meadow. It was situated in that part of "Plum Trees" known as "East Swamp." When we arrived at the meadow I asked my father where "Ivy Island" was.

"Yonder, at the north end of this meadow, where you see those beautiful trees rising in the distance," he replied.

I looked towards the place indicated, and my bosom swelled with inexpressible pride and delight, as I beheld for the first time the munificent gift of my honored and generous grandsire.

The forenoon soon slipped away; I turned the grass as fast as two men could cut it, and after making a hasty repast with my father and the workmen under the shade trees, our favorite

hired man, a good-natured Irishman named Edmund, taking an axe upon his shoulders, told me he was ready to go with me to visit "Ivy Island."

I started upon my feet with delight, but could not restrain asking him why he took an axe. He replied that perhaps I would like to have him cut into some of the beautiful specimens of timber upon my property, in order that I could see how superior it was in quality to that found in any other part of the world. His answer was perfectly satisfactory, and we started. As we approached the north end of the meadow the ground became swampy and wet, and we found great difficulty in proceeding. We were obliged to leap from bog to bog, and frequently making a mis-step, I found myself up to my middle in water. At one time I stood upon a bog, and the next was so far off that I greatly feared I could not reach it. My companion, who was several rods in advance of me, saw my dilemma, and called out for me to leap stoutly and I should succeed.

"I am sure I cannot," I replied; "and if I could, I shall be worse off when I reach the next bog than I am now, for there is no place near it that is above water."

"You are a little off from the regular track," responded my Hibernian friend; "but never mind, you will have to wade a little."

"The water will be over my head, and I shall be drowned," I replied, in a most despairing tone.

"Divil a danger at all at all, for the water is not four feet deep in the deepest place," was the reply.

"If I go under, you must help me out," I replied tremblingly.

"To be sure I will; so never fear, but give a strong jump, and you are all safe," was the encouraging response.

I summoned all my strength, clenched both my hands, sprang with all my force, and just saved myself by striking upon the edge of the next bog. I straightened myself up, got upon the middle of the bog, and began to prepare for wading in the water, which I greatly feared would be too deep for me to ford, when I saw countless hornets rising from the spot on which I

stood. Instantly they came buzzing about my face and ears. One vicious rascal stung me on the tip of my nose, and, shrieking with the smart, I leaped into the water regardless of consequences. I soon found myself up to my neck, and fearful that the next step would carry me under water altogether, I roared lustily for help.

The trusty Irishman, feeling that there was no real cause for alarm, broke into a peal of laughter, and bade me be of good cheer. "For," said he, "you'll not have to wade more than a quarter of a mile in that way before you reach the verge of your valuable property."

"If I go under, you must help me in a moment, for I can't swim," I replied despondingly.

"Niver fear me; if I see ye in danger I'll have ye out in a twinkling."

With this assurance I made an advance step and found my head still in the air. Half a dozen hornets now attacked me, and I involuntarily ducked my head under the water. When I popped out again my tormentors had disappeared, and I waded on as well as I could towards "Ivy Island." After about fifteen minutes, during which time I floundered through the morass, now stepping on a piece of submerged wood, and anon slipping into a hole, I rolled out upon dry land, covered with mud, out of breath, and looking considerably more like a drowned rat than a human being.

"Thank the Merciful Powers, ye are safe at last," said my Irish companion.

"Oh, what a dreadful time I have had, and how that hornet's sting smarts!" I groaned, in misery.

"Niver mind, my boy; we have only to cross this little creek, and ye'll be upon yer own valuable property," was the encouraging reply.

I looked, and behold we had arrived upon the margin of a stream ten or twelve feet wide, the banks of which were so thickly lined with alders that a person could scarcely squeeze between them.

"Good heavens!" I exclaimed. "Is my property surrounded with water?"

"How the devil could it be '*Ivy Island*' if it was not?" was the quick response.

"Oh! I had never thought about the meaning of the name," I replied; "but how in the world can we get across this brook?"

"Faith, and now you'll see the use of the axe, I am thinking," replied Edmund, as he cut his way through the alders, and proceeded to fell a small oak tree which stood upon the bank of the stream. This tree fell directly across the brook, and thus formed a temporary bridge, over which Edmund kindly assisted me.

I now found myself upon "*Ivy Island*" and began to look about me with curiosity.

"Why, there seems to be nothing here but stunted ivies and a few straggling trees!" I exclaimed.

"How else could it be '*Ivy Island*'?" was the quiet answer.

I proceeded a few rods towards the centre of my domain, perfectly chop-fallen. The truth rushed upon me. I had been made a fool of by all our neighborhood for more than half a dozen years. My rich "*Ivy Island*" was an inaccessible piece of barren land, not worth a farthing, and all my visions of future wealth and greatness vanished into thin air. While I stood pondering upon my sudden downfall, I discovered a monstrous black snake approaching me, with upraised head and piercing black eyes. I gave one halloo and took to my heels. The Irishman helped me across the temporary bridge, and this was my first and *last* visit to "*Ivy Island*"! ¹ We got back to the meadow, and found my father and men mowing away lustily.

"Well, how do you like your property?" asked my father, with the most imperturbable gravity.

¹ *Ivy Island* is still known locally by that name. Timber has since been cut from it, and it is ranged by an occasional hunter. [Ed.]

"I would sell it pretty cheap," I responded, holding down my head.

A tremendous roar of laughter bursting from all the workmen showed that they were in the secret. On returning home at night, my grandfather called to congratulate me, with as serious a countenance as if "Ivy Island" was indeed a valuable domain, instead of a barren waste, over which he and the whole neighborhood had chuckled ever since I was born. My mother, too, with a grave physiognomy, hoped I had found it as rich as I anticipated. Several of our neighbors called to ask if I was not glad now, that I was named Phineas; and from that time during the next five years I was continually reminded of the valuable property known as "Ivy Island."

I can the more heartily laugh at this practical joke, because that inheritance was long afterwards of service to me. "Ivy Island" was a part of the weight that made the wheel of fortune begin to turn in my favor at a time when my head was downward.²

"What is the price of razor-strops?" inquired my grandfather of a peddler, whose wagon, loaded with Yankee notions, stood in front of our store.

"A dollar each for Pomeroy's strops," responded the itinerant merchant.

"A dollar apiece!" exclaimed my grandfather. "They'll be sold for half the money before the year is out."

"If one of Pomeroy's strops is sold for fifty cents within a year, I'll make you a present of one," replied the peddler.

"I'll purchase one on those conditions. Now, Ben, I call you to witness the contract," said my grandfather, addressing himself to Esquire Hoyt.

"All right," responded Ben.

"Yes," said the peddler, "I'll do as I say, and there's no backout to me."

My grandfather took the strop, and put it in his side coat-pocket. Presently drawing it out, and turning to Esquire Hoyt,

² See chapter ix. [Ed.]

he said, " Ben, I don't much like this strop now I have bought it. How much will you give for it? "

" Well, I guess, seeing it's you, I'll give fifty cents," drawled the Squire, with a wicked twinkle in his eye, which said that the strop and the peddler were both incontinently sold.

" You can take it. I guess I'll get along with my old one a spell longer," said my grandfather, giving the peddler a knowing look.

The strop changed hands, and the peddler exclaimed, " I acknowledge, gentlemen. What's to pay? "

" Treat the company, and confess you are taken in, or else give me a strop," replied my grandfather.

" I never will confess nor treat," said the peddler, " but I'll give you a strop for your wit;" and suiting the action to the word, he handed a second strop to his customer. A hearty laugh ensued, in which the peddler joined.

" Some pretty sharp fellows here in Bethel," said a bystander, addressing the peddler.

" Tolerable, but nothing to brag of," replied the peddler. " I have made seventy-five cents by the operation."

" How is that? " was the inquiry.

" I have received a dollar for two strops which cost me only twelve and a half cents each," replied the peddler; " but having heard of the cute tricks of the Bethel chaps, I thought I would look out for them and fix my prices accordingly. I generally sell these strops at twenty-five cents each, but, gentlemen, if you want any more at fifty cents apiece, I shall be happy to supply your whole village."

Our neighbors laughed out of the other side of their mouths, but no more strops were purchased.

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There is something to be learned even in a country store. We are apt to believe that sharp trades, especially dishonest tricks and unprincipled deceptions, are confined entirely to the city,

MANY EXCEPTIONS

and that the unsophisticated men and women of the country do every thing "on the square." I believe this to be measurably true, but know that there are many exceptions to this rule. Many is the time I cut open bundles of rags, brought to the store by country women in exchange for goods, and declared to be all linen and cotton, that contained quantities of worthless woollen trash in the interior, and sometimes stones, gravel, ashes, etc. And sometimes, too, have I (contrary to our usual practice) measured the load of oats, corn, or rye which our farmer-customer assured us contained a specified number of bushels, perhaps sixty, and found it four or five bushels short. Of course the astonished woman would impute the rag-swindle to a servant or neighbor who had made it up without her knowledge, and the man would charge carelessness upon his "help" who measured the grain, and by mistake "made a wrong count." These were exceptions to the general rule of honesty, but they occurred with sufficient frequency to make us watchful of our customers, and to teach me the truth of the adage, "There's cheating in all trades but ours."

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CHAPTER III

SUNDAY-SCHOOL—OLD MEETING-HOUSE

The Sunday-School—Eccentric Clergyman—The Wedding Fee—Doctrinal Discussions—The Old Meeting-House—The Stove Reform—Power of Imagination—The Deacon's Appeal—The Bible-Class—The One Thing Needful.

LIKE most persons in the New England States, I was brought up to attend church regularly on the Sabbath. Indeed, before I was able to read, I was one of the first scholars in Sunday-school. We had but one church or "meeting-house" in Bethel (Presbyterian),¹ and here all attended. A difference in creeds and sects was scarcely known in our little country village at that time. The old meeting-house had neither steeple nor bell, but in summer time it was a comfortable place for the inhabitants to congregate. My good mother would teach me my lessons in the New Testament and the Catechism, and my highest aspiration was to get every word so perfectly as to obtain the reward of merit. This valuable pecuniary consideration consisted of a ticket which stated that the bearer was entitled to one mill "reward," so that ten tickets were worth one cent; and as this reward was not payable in cash, but in Sunday-school books at ten cents each, it follows that one hundred tickets would be required to purchase one book, so that a scholar must be successful every consecutive Sabbath (which

¹ Under the "Saybrook platform," ratified by the General Court, the scheme of organization of the Congregational churches was "a modified Presbyterianism." With the adoption of this platform, "the Congregational churches of Connecticut passed into their semi-Presbyterian stage of existence; indeed, toward the end of the [eighteenth] century, President Dwight uses the terms 'Congregational' and 'Presbyterian' as about convertible." (Johnston: "Connecticut," p. 232.) [Ed.]

was simply impossible) for the space of two years before he could come in possession of a tangible prize! Infinitesimal as was this recompense, it was sufficient to spur me to intense diligence.

The first clergyman whom I remember preaching in Bethel was the Rev. Samuel Sturges. At the time I was a clerk, the Rev. Mr. Lowe was the preacher. He traded at our store, and although he was fond of his pipe, and most clergymen in those days who visited my father and grandfather loved their "glass," I was impressed with the belief that the clergy, individually and collectively, were considerably more than human. I still entertain sincere respect for that calling, and am certain that many of its members (as all ought to be) are devoted disciples of their blessed Master; yet it is sadly true, that as the "best fruit is most pecked by the birds," so also is the best cause most liable to be embraced by hypocrites; and we all have learned, with pain and sorrow, that the title "Rev." does not necessarily imply a saint, for nothing can prevent our sometimes being deceived by a "wolf in sheep's clothing."

The Rev. Richard Varick Dey, who resided at Greenfield, Ct., was in the habit of coming to Bethel to preach on Sabbath evenings. He was a very eloquent preacher, and an eccentric man. He possessed fine talents—his sermons were rich in pathos and wit, and he was exceedingly popular with the world's people. The more straight-laced, however, were afraid of him. His remarks both in and out of the pulpit would frequently rub hard against some popular dogma, or knock in the head some favorite religious tenet. Mr. Dey was therefore frequently in hot water with the church—and was either "suspended" or about to be brought to trial for some alleged breach of ministerial duty or some suspected heresy. While thus debarred from preaching, he felt that he must do something to support his family. With this view he visited Bethel, Danbury, and other towns, and delivered lectures, at the termination of which, contributions for his benefit were taken up. I remember

his lecturing in Bethel on "Charity." This discourse overflowed with eloquence and pathos, and terminated in a contribution of more than fifty dollars.

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I have often heard Mr. Dey relate the following anecdote. A young couple called on him one day at his house in Greenfield. They informed him that they were from the southern portion of the State, and desired to be married. They were well dressed, made considerable display of jewelry, and altogether wore an air of respectability. Mr. Dey felt confident that all was right, and calling in several witnesses, he proceeded to unite them in the holy bonds of wedlock.

After the ceremonies were concluded, Mr. Dey invited the happy pair (as was usual in those days) to partake of some cake and wine. They thus spent a social half-hour together, and on rising to depart the bridegroom handed Mr. Dey a twenty-dollar bank note, remarking that this was the smallest bill he had, but if he would be so good as to pay their hotel bill (they had merely dined and fed their horse at the hotel) he could retain the balance of the money for his services. Mr. Dey thanked him for his liberality, and proceeded at once to the hotel with the lady and gentleman and informed the landlord that he would settle their bill. They proceeded on their journey, and the next day it was discovered that the bank note was a counterfeit, and that Mr. Dey had to pay nearly three dollars for the privilege of marrying this loving couple!

The newspapers in various parts of the State subsequently published facts which showed that the affectionate pair got married in every town they passed through — thus paying their expenses and fleecing the clergymen by means of counterfeits.

One of the deacons of Mr. Dey's church asked him if he usually kissed the bride at weddings. "Always," was the reply. "How do you manage when the happy pair are negroes?"

FREEZING IN CHURCH

was the deacon's next question. "In all such cases," replied Mr. Dey, "the duty of kissing is appointed to the deacons."

My grandfather was a Universalist,² and for various reasons, fancied or real, he was bitterly opposed to the Presbyterians in doctrinal views, though personally some of them were his warmest and most intimate friends. Being much attached to Mr. Dey, he induced that gentleman to deliver a series of Sunday evening sermons in Bethel, and my grandfather was not only on all these occasions one of the most prominent and attentive hearers, but Mr. Dey was always his guest. He would generally stop over Monday and Tuesday with my grandfather, and as several of the most social neighbors were called in, they usually had a jolly time of it. Occasionally "mine host" would attack Mr. Dey good-naturedly on theological points, and would generally come off second best, but he delighted, although vanquished, to repeat the sharp answers with which Mr. Dey met his objections to the "confession of faith."

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I have before said that our old meeting-house, without either steeple or bell, was a comfortable place in summer. But my teeth chatter even now, as I think of the dreary, cold, and freezing times we had there in winter. Such a thing as a stove in a meeting-house had never been heard of in those days, and an innovation of that description would have been considered little less than sacrilege. The old-fashioned sermons were an hour and a half to two hours long, and there the congregation would sit and shiver, and their faces would look so blue that it is no wonder "the world's people" sometimes called them "blue skins." They were literally so.

Our mothers and grandmothers were the only persons who

² The Rev. Hosea Ballou the elder (1771-1852), one of the founders of Universalism in the United States, preached in September 1807 the first Universalist sermon delivered in Danbury. In 1822 a society was organized; and of this society P. T. Barnum was later for some years clerk. [Ed.]

were permitted to approach comfort. Such as could afford it had a "muff and tippet" and carried a "foot-stove," which consisted of a small square tin box, perforated, and inclosed in a wood frame, with a wire handle. There was a door in one side, in which was thrust a small square iron dish of live coals, sprinkled over with a few ashes. Those who lived some distance from the meeting-house took their foot-stove in the wagon or "cutter" — for there was generally good sleighing in winter — and on arriving "to meeting" they would replenish the foot-stove with fresh coals at the nearest neighbor's before entering the sanctuary.

At last, and after many years, the spirit of reform reached the shivering congregation of the old Bethel meeting-house. A brother who was evidently quite ahead of the age, and not, as some of the older brethren thought, "out of his head," had the temerity to propose that a stove should be introduced into the church for the purpose of heating. Many brethren and sisters raised their hands and rolled their eyes in surprise and horror. "A pretty pass, indeed, when professing Christians needed a fire to warm their zeal." The proposition was impious, and it was voted down by an overwhelming majority.

The "reformer," however, persevered, and, by persuasion and argument, he gradually gained a few converts. He argued that one large stove for heating the whole house was as harmless as fifty small stoves to warm the fifty pairs of feet belonging to the owners of said portable stoves; and while some saw no analogy between the two cases, others declared that if he was mad there was "method in his madness."

Another year rolled by; cold November arrived, and the stove question was again mooted. Excitement ran high; night meetings and church caucuses were held to discuss the question; arguments were made pro and con in the village stores; the subject was introduced into conference meetings and prayed over; even the youngsters had the question brought up in the debating club, and early in December a general "society's meet-

A LARGER STOVE DEMANDED

ing" was called to decide by ballot whether there should or should not be a stove in the meeting-house.

The ayes carried it by a majority of one, and, to the consternation of the minority, the stove was introduced. On the first Sabbath afterwards two venerable maiden ladies fainted on account of the dry atmosphere and sickly sensation caused by the dreaded innovation. They were carried out into the cold air, and soon returned to consciousness, after being informed that in consequence of there not being pipe enough within two lengths, no fire had yet been placed in the stove!

The following Sunday was a bitter cold day, and the stove was crammed with well-seasoned hickory wood and brought nearly to a red heat. This made most parts of the house comfortable, pleased many, and horrified a few.

Immediately after the benediction had been pronounced, at the close of the afternoon service, one of the deacons, whose "pew" was near the door, arose and exclaimed, in a loud voice, "The congregation are requested to tarry."

Every person promptly sat down on hearing this common announcement. The old deacon approached the altar, and turning to the people, addressed them in a whining tone of voice as follows:

"Brethren and sisters, you will bear me witness that from the first I have raised my voice against introducing a stove into the house of the Lord. But a majority has pronounced against me. I trust they voted in the fear of God, and I submit, for I would not wittingly introduce schisms into our church; but if we must have a stove I do insist on having a larger one, for the one you have is not large enough to heat the whole house, and the consequence is, it drives all the cold back as far as the outside pews, making them three times as cold as they were before, and we who occupy those pews are obliged to sit in the entire cold of this whole house."

The countenance and manner of the speaker indicated, beyond all doubt, that he was sincere, and nothing would appease

him until the "business committee" agreed to take the subject into consideration. In the course of the week they satisfied him that the stove was large enough, except on unusually severe days, but they found great difficulty in making him comprehend that if the stove did not heat the entire building, it did not intensify the cold by driving it all into a corner.

While Rev. Mr. Lowe preached in Bethel he formed quite a large Bible-class, which was composed mostly of boys and girls from twelve to fourteen years of age. I was one of the class. A portion of our duty was to take a verse selected by the minister, write out our explanation of it, and drop the composition into a hat passed round for the purpose. All the articles were then read aloud by the clergyman. As the verses selected and distributed to the scholars were also promiscuously drawn from a hat, no person, not even Mr. Lowe himself, knew what subject fell to any particular scholar.

The Bible-class was held immediately after the conclusion of the afternoon services, and it was customary for the entire congregation to remain and hear the compositions read. Sometimes the explanations given by the scholars were wretched, sometimes ludicrous, but generally very good. I think that my own usually fell under the second head. Mr. Lowe always made a few remarks at the reading of each composition, either by way of approval or dissent, and in the latter case he always gave his reasons.

I remember that on one occasion I drew from the hat, Luke x. 42: "But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." *Question.* "What is the one thing needful?"

I took home my verse and question, and at the first opportunity wrote out the explanation about as follows:

"This question, 'What is the one thing needful?' is capable of receiving various answers, depending much upon the persons to whom it is addressed.

"The merchant might answer that 'the one thing needful

“ THE ONE THING NEEDFUL ”

is plenty of customers, who buy liberally without “beating down,” and pay cash for all their purchases.’

“The farmer might reply that ‘the one thing needful is large harvests and high prices.’

“The physician might answer that ‘it is plenty of patients.’

“The lawyer might be of opinion that ‘it is an unruly community always engaged in bickerings and litigations.’

“The clergyman might reply, ‘It is a fat salary, with multitudes of sinners seeking salvation and paying large pew-rents.’

“The bachelor might exclaim, ‘It is a pretty wife who loves her husband, and who knows how to sew on buttons.’

“The maiden might answer, ‘It is a good husband, who will love, cherish, and protect me while life shall last.’

“But the most proper answer, and doubtless that which applied to the case of Mary, would be, ‘The one thing needful is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, follow in his footsteps, love God and obey His commandments, love our fellow-man, and embrace every opportunity of administering to his necessities. In short, the one thing needful is to live a life that we can always look back upon with satisfaction, and be enabled ever to contemplate its termination with trust in Him who has so kindly vouchsafed it to us, surrounding us with innumerable blessings, if we have but the heart and wisdom to receive them in a proper manner.’ ”

Although the reading of most of the above caused a tittering among the audience, in which the clergyman himself could scarcely refrain from joining, and although the name of “Taylor Barnum” was frequently whispered among the congregation, I had the satisfaction of hearing the Rev. Mr. Lowe say, at the conclusion, that it was a well-written and correct answer to the question, “What is the one thing needful?”

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CHAPTER IV

ANECDOTES WITH AN EPISODE

My Grandfather's Voyage — A Stray Clergyman — The Beard Question — A Quandary — The Whiskers Doomed — Half Shaved — The Razor Overboard — Indian File — Unique Procession — The Joke Kept Up — Christian's Death-Bed — Blue-Laws — The Stage Agent — Dodging the Deacons — Stretching the Legs — Jehu's Consternation — A Dry Season — The Miller's Trial — The Verdict.

DANBURY and Bethel were and still are manufacturing villages. Hats and combs were the principal articles of manufacture.¹ The hatters and comb-makers had occasion to go to New York every spring and fall, and they generally managed to go in parties, frequently taking in a few "outsiders" who merely wished to visit the city for the fun of the thing. They usually took passage on board a sloop at Norwalk, and the length of their passage depended entirely upon the state of the wind. Sometimes the run would be made in eight hours, and at other times nearly as many days were required. It however made little difference with the passengers. They went in for "a spree," and were sure to have a jolly time whether on land or water. They were all fond of practical jokes, and before starting they usually entered into a solemn compact, that any man who got angry at a practical joke should forfeit and pay

¹ Bethel, previously a village in the southern part of the township of Danbury, was taken from Danbury and incorporated in May 1855, the year in which appeared "The Life of P. T. Barnum Written by Himself." Danbury became a city in 1889. According to Barber ("Connecticut Historical Collections"), Bethel had in 1835 (when Barnum was twenty-five) about 50 dwelling-houses in the village, 12 comb-shops, 15 hat-shops; the hat-shops employing 200 persons, the comb-shops about 180. — Says Beers ("The Connecticut Wits," p. 28): "There is Danbury, for example, which one associates with the manufacture of hats and a somewhat rowdy annual fair." [Ed.]

ON BOARD THE SLOOP

the sum of twenty dollars. This agreement frequently saved much trouble, for occasionally an unexpected and rather severe trick would be played off, and sadly chafe the temper of the victim.

Upon one of these occasions a party of fourteen men started from Bethel on a Monday morning for New York. Among the number were my grandfather, Capt. Noah Ferry, Benjamin Hoyt, Esq., Uncle Samuel Taylor (as he was called by everybody), Eleazer Taylor, and Charles Dart. Most of these were proverbial jokers, and it was doubly necessary to adopt the stipulation in regard to the control of temper. It was therefore done in writing, duly signed.

They arrived at Norwalk Monday afternoon. The sloop set sail the same evening, with a fair prospect of reaching New York early the next morning. Several strangers took passage at Norwalk, among the rest a clergyman. He soon found himself in jolly company, and attempted to keep aloof. But they informed him it was no use, they expected to reach New York the next morning, and were determined to "make a night of it," so he might as well render himself agreeable, for sleep was out of the question. His "Reverence" remonstrated at first, and talked about his rights but he soon learned that he was in a company where the rights of "the majority" were in the ascendant; so he put a smooth face upon affairs, and making up his mind not to retire that night, he soon engaged in conversation with several of his fellow-passengers.

The clergyman was a slim, spare man, standing over six feet high in his stockings, light complexion, sandy hair, and wearing a huge pair of reddish-brown whiskers. Some of the passengers joked him upon the superfluity of hair upon his face, but he replied that nature had placed it there, and although he thought proper, in accordance with modern custom, to shave off a portion of his beard, he considered it neither unmanly nor unclerical to wear whiskers. It seemed to be conceded that the clergyman had the best of the argument, and the subject was changed.

Expectation of a speedy run to New York was most sadly

disappointed. The vessel appeared scarcely to move, and through long weary hours of day and night, there was not a ripple on the surface of the water. Nevertheless there was merriment on board the sloop, each voyager contributing good humor to beguile the tediousness of time.

Friday morning came, but the calm continued. Five days from home and no prospect of reaching New York! We may judge the appearance of the beards of the passengers. There was but one razor in the company; it was owned by my grandfather — and he refused to use it, or to suffer it to be used. “We shall all be shaved in New York,” said he.

On Saturday morning “all hands” appeared upon deck — and the sloop was becalmed opposite Sawpitts (now Port Chester)!

This tried the patience of the passengers sadly.

“I expected to start for home to-day,” said one.

“I supposed all my combs would have been sold at auction on Wednesday, and yet here they are on board,” said another.

“I intended to have sold my hats surely this week, for I have a note to pay in New Haven on Monday,” added a third.

“I have an appointment to preach in New York this evening and to-morrow,” said the clergyman, whose huge sandy whiskers overshadowed a face now completely covered with a bright red beard a quarter of an inch long.

“Well, there is no use crying, gentlemen,” replied the captain; “it is lucky for us that we have chickens and eggs on freight, or we might have to be put upon allowance.”

After breakfast the passengers, who now began to look like barbarians, again solicited the loan of my grandfather’s razor.

“No, gentlemen,” he replied. “I insist that shaving is unhealthy and contrary to nature, and I am determined neither to shave myself nor loan my razor until we reach New York.”

Night came, and yet no wind. Sunday morning found them in the same position. Their patience was well-nigh exhausted, but after breakfast a slight ripple appeared. It gradually increased, and the passengers were soon delighted in seeing the anchor

weighed and the sails again set. The sloop glided finely through the water, and smiles of satisfaction forced themselves through the swamps of bristles which covered the faces of the passengers.

“What time shall we reach New York if this breeze continues?” was the anxious inquiry of half a dozen passengers.

“About two o’clock this afternoon,” replied the good-natured captain, who now felt assured that no calm would further blight his prospects.

“Alas! that will be too late to get shaved,” exclaimed several voices — “the barber shops close at twelve.”

“And I shall barely be in time to preach my afternoon sermon,” responded the red-bearded clergyman. “Mr. Taylor, do be so kind as to loan me your shaving utensils,” he continued, addressing my grandfather.

The old gentleman then went to his trunk, and unlocking it, he drew forth his razor, lather-box, and strop. The passengers pressed around him, as all were now doubly anxious for a chance to shave themselves.

“Now, gentlemen,” said my grandfather, “I will be fair with you. I did not intend to lend my razor, but as we shall arrive too late for the barbers, you shall all use it. But it is evident we cannot all have time to be shaved with one razor before we reach New York, and as it would be hard for half of us to walk on shore with clean faces, and leave the rest on board waiting for their turn to shave themselves, I have hit upon a plan which I am sure you will all say is just and equitable.”

“What is it?” was the anxious inquiry.

“It is that each man shall shave one half of his face, and pass the razor over to the next, and when we are all half shaved we shall go on in rotation and shave the other half.”

They all agreed to this except the clergyman. He objected to appearing so ridiculous upon the Lord’s day, whereupon several declared that any man with such enormous reddish whiskers must necessarily always look ridiculous, and they insisted

that if the clergyman used the razor at all he should shave off his whiskers.

My grandfather assented to this proposal, and said: "Now, gentlemen, as I own the razor, I will begin, and as our reverend friend is in a hurry he shall be next — but off shall come one of his whiskers on the first turn, or he positively shall not use my razor at all."

The clergyman seeing there was no use in parleying, reluctantly agreed to the proposition.

In the course of ten minutes one side of my grandfather's face and chin, in a straight line from the middle of his nose, was shaved as close as the back of his hand, while the other looked like a thick brush fence in a country swamp. The passengers burst into a roar of laughter in which the clergyman irresistibly joined, and my grandfather handed the razor to the clerical gentleman.

The clergyman had already well lathered one half of his face and passed the brush to the next customer. In a short time the razor had performed its work, and the clergyman was denuded of one whisker. The left side of his face was as naked as that of an infant, while from the other cheek four inches of a huge red whisker stood out in powerful contrast. Nothing more ludicrous could well be conceived. A deafening burst of laughter ensued, and the poor clergyman slunk quietly away to wait an hour until his turn should arrive to shave the other portion of his face.

The next man went through the same operation, and all the rest followed; a new laugh breaking forth as each customer handed over the razor to the next in turn. In the course of an hour and a quarter every passenger on board was half shaved. It was then proposed that all should go upon deck and take a drink before operations were commenced on the other side of their faces. When they all gathered upon the deck the scene was most ludicrous. The whole party burst again into loud merriment, each man being convulsed by the ridiculous appearance of the rest.

WELL-FEIGNED SURPRISE

"Now, gentlemen," said my grandfather, "I will go into the cabin and shave off the other side. You can all remain on deck. As soon as I have finished I will come up and give the clergyman the next chance."

"You must hurry or you will not all be finished when we arrive," remarked the captain, "for we shall touch Peck Slip wharf in half an hour."

My grandfather entered the cabin, and in ten minutes he appeared upon deck razor in hand. He was smoothly shaved.

"Now," said the clergyman, "it is my turn."

"Certainly," said my grandfather. "You are next, but wait a moment, let me draw the razor across the strop once or twice."

Putting his foot upon the side rail of the deck and placing one end of the strop upon his leg, he drew the razor several times across it. Then as if by mistake the razor flew from his hand, and dropped into the water! My grandfather with well-feigned surprise exclaimed in a voice of terror, "Good heavens! the razor has fallen overboard!"

Such a picture of consternation as covered one half of all the passengers' faces was never before witnessed. At first they were perfectly silent as if petrified with astonishment. But in a few minutes murmurs began to be heard and soon swelled into exclamations. "An infernal hog!" said one. "The meanest thing I ever knew," remarked another. "He ought to be thrown overboard himself," cried several others; but all remembered that every man who got angry was to pay a fine of twenty dollars, and they did not repeat their remarks. Presently all eyes were turned upon the clergyman. He was the most forlorn picture of despair that could be imagined.

"Oh, this is dreadful!" he drawled in a tone which seemed as if every word broke a heart-string.

This was too much, and the whole crowd broke into another roar. Tranquillity was restored! The joke, though a hard one, was swallowed. The sloop soon touched the dock. The half-shaved passengers now agreed that my grandfather, who was

the only person on board who appeared like a civilized being, should take the lead for the Walton House in Franklin Square, and all the rest should follow in "Indian file." He reminded them that they would excite much attention in the streets, and enjoined them not to smile. They agreed, and away they started. They attracted a crowd of persons before they reached the corner of Pearl street and Peck Slip, but they all marched with as much solemnity as if they were going to the grave. The door of the Walton House was open. Old Backus the landlord was quietly enjoying his cigar, while a dozen or two persons were engaged in reading the papers, etc. In marched the file of nondescripts with the rabble at their heels. Mr. Backus and his customers started to their feet in astonishment. My grandfather marched solemnly up to the bar — the passengers followed and formed double rows behind him. "Santa Cruz rum for nineteen," exclaimed my grandfather to the barkeeper. The astonished liquor-seller produced bottles and tumblers in double-quick time, and when Backus discovered that the nondescripts were old friends and customers, he was excited to uncontrollable merriment.

"What in the name of decency has happened," he exclaimed, "that you should all appear here half shaved?"

"Nothing at all, Mr. Backus," said my grandfather, with apparent seriousness. "These gentlemen choose to wear their beards according to the prevailing fashion in the place they came from, and I think it is very hard that they should be stared at and insulted by you Yorkers because *your* fashion happens to differ a trifle from theirs."

Backus half believed my grandfather in earnest, and the bystanders were quite convinced such was the fact, for not a smile appeared upon one of the half-shaved countenances.

After sitting a few minutes the passengers were shown to their rooms, and at tea-time every man appeared at the table precisely as they came from the sloop. The ladies looked astonished, the waiters winked and laughed, but the subjects of this merriment were as grave as judges. In the evening they

FINAL COUNSEL

maintained the same gravity in the bar-room, and at ten o'clock they retired to bed with all due solemnity. In the morning, however, bright and early, they were in the barber's shop undergoing an operation that soon placed them upon a footing with the rest of mankind.

It is hardly necessary to explain that the clergyman did not appear in that singular procession of Sunday afternoon. He tied a handkerchief over his face, and taking his valise in his hand, started for Market street, where it is presumed he found a good brother and a good razor in season to fill his appointment.

In the month of August, 1825, my maternal grandmother met with an accident which, although considered trivial at the time, resulted in her death. While walking in the garden she stepped upon the point of a rusty nail, which ran perhaps half an inch into her foot. It was immediately extracted, but the foot became swollen, and in a few days the most alarming symptoms were manifest. She was soon sensible that she was upon her death-bed, but she was a good Christian, and her approaching end had no terrors for her. The day before her departure, and while in the full possession of her faculties, she sent for all her grandchildren to take their final leave of her. I never can forget the sensations which I experienced when my turn came to approach her bed-side, and when, taking my hand in hers, she spoke to me of her approaching dissolution, of the joys of religion, the consoling reflections that a death-bed afforded those who could feel that they had tried to live good lives and be of benefit to their fellow-men. She besought me to think seriously of religion, to read my Bible often, to pray to our Father in heaven, to be regular in my attendance at church; to use no profane nor idle language, and especially to remember that I could in no way so effectually prove my love to God, as in loving all my fellow-beings. I was affected to tears, and promised to remember her counsel. When I received from her a farewell kiss, knowing that I should never behold her again alive, I was

completely overcome, and however much I may have since departed from her injunctions, the impressions received at that death-bed scene have ever been vivid among my recollections, and I trust they have proved in some degree salutary. A more sincere Christian or a more exemplary woman than my grandmother I have never seen.

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In the days of which I am now writing, a much stricter outward regard was paid to the Sabbath in the State of Connecticut than at present.² If a man was seen riding horseback or in a carriage on Sunday before sundown, a tithing-man, deacon of a church, or grand-jury man was sure to arrest him, and unless he could show that sickness or some other case of necessity induced him to come out, he was fined the next day.

The mail stage from New York to Boston was permitted to run on the Sabbath, but in no case to take passengers. Sometimes the cupidity of the New York agents would induce them to book travellers through Connecticut on the holy day, but nearly every meeting-house had its sentinel on the look-out, and it was very difficult for a driver to escape being arrested if he had one or more persons in his coach. In that case the driver, his horses, stage, mail, and passengers were obliged to "lie to" until Monday morning, when driver and passengers must each pay a fine before being permitted to depart.

On one occasion, Oliver Taylor and Benjamin Hoyt, a brace of wags from Bethel, were in New York, and as the way-bill was filled for several week-days ahead, they went to the stage office, No. 21 Bowery, early one Sunday morning, and asked to be carried that day to Norwalk, Ct.

"It can't be done," peremptorily replied the stage agent.

"It is very important," responded Oliver. "My wife and

² See Earle: "The Sabbath in Puritan New England"; xvii, "The Observance of the Day." [Ed.]

children are dangerously sick at Bethel, and I must reach there before to-morrow morning.”

“ And my mother isn’t expected to live the day out,” meekly added Squire Ben, with a face considerably elongated.

“ It won’t do, gentlemen; these periodical sicknesses are excessively prevalent, and I am *wonderfully* sorry for you, but we have been stopped, fined, and our mail detained several times this year, in your State. We are decidedly sick of it, and will carry no more passengers in Connecticut on Sunday,” was the prompt reply.

“ They are not as strict now as they were formerly,” urged Mr. Taylor.

“ Not half,” added Mr. Hoyt.

“ Formerly!” exclaimed the agent. “ Why, it is only two weeks since we were arrested in Stamford.”

“ Yes, and it cost me eleven dollars besides the detention,” added the proprietor, who had just stepped in.

“ Now, sir,” said Mr. Taylor, addressing the proprietor, “ our business is urgent; we are Connecticut men, and know Connecticut laws and Connecticut deacons — yes, and how to dodge them, too. We will pay you ten dollars for our passages to Norwalk, and whenever we pass through a Connecticut village we will lie down on the bottom of the stage, and thus your vehicle, being apparently empty, will pass through unmolested.”

“ Will you do this promptly as you pass through each Connecticut village?” asked the melting proprietor.

“ Positively,” was the reply of Taylor and Hoyt.

“ Well, I don’t think it any sin to dodge your Yankee blue-laws, and I’ll take you on those conditions,” responded the stage man.

The passage money was paid, the two valises snugly packed under the inside seats, and their two owners were as snugly seated in the mail coach.

“ Remember your promises, gentlemen, and dodge the Yankee deacons,” said the stage proprietor, just as the driver

flourished his long whip, and the horses started off in a gallop. The two passengers nodded a willing assent.

Messrs. Taylor and Hoyt knew every inch of the road. As the stage approached the Connecticut line, they prepared to stow themselves away. Just before reaching Greenwich, they both stretched themselves upon their backs on the bottom of the coach. The agents of the law — and gospel — were on the look-out, the driver's face assumed a most innocent look, the apparently empty stage "passed muster," and was permitted to move along unmolested, a straight-laced deacon merely remarking to the tithing-man, "I guess them 'ere Yorkers have concluded it won't pay to send their passengers up this way on the Lord's day." The tithing-man nodded his satisfaction.

At Stamford the game of "hide and seek" was successfully repeated. At Darien, which is within six miles of Norwalk, where our passengers were to leave the stage and take their chances for reaching Bethel, about twenty miles north, they once more laid themselves down upon their backs, and the driver, assuming a demure look, let his horses take a slow trot though the village.

"Now, Ben," said Taylor, "I'm a-going to give the deacons a chance, fine or no fine," and instantly he thrust his feet a tempting distance out of the side window of the coach.

"Oh, for heaven's sake draw in your feet," exclaimed Hoyt, in horror, as he saw a pair of boots sticking a couple of feet (no pun intended) out of the window.

"Couldn't think of such a thing," quietly responded Taylor, with a chuckle.

"But we agreed to hide, and now you are exposing the stage-driver as well as ourselves," urged the conscientious and greatly alarmed Hoyt.

"We agreed to lie on our backs, and we are doing it flat enough; but my legs want stretching, and they must have it," was the mischievous reply.

They were now opposite the village church, and the poor driver, unconscious of the grand display his passengers were

making, carried his head high up, as much as to say, "You may look, gentlemen, but it's no use."

A watchful deacon, horror-struck at beholding a pair of boots with real legs in them emerging from the stage window, hallooed to the driver to stop.

"I'm empty, and sha'n't do it," responded coachee, with a tone of injured innocence.

"You have got a passenger, and *must* stop," earnestly replied the deacon.

The driver, turning his face towards the body of his coach, was alarmed at seeing a pair of legs dangling out of the window, and with a look of dismay instantly jerking his reins and giving his horses half a dozen smart cuts, they struck into a quick gallop just as the deacon's hand reached within a foot of the leader's bridle. The coach slightly grazed the deacon, half knocking him over, and was soon beyond his reach. The frightened driver applied the lash with all his might, continually hallooing, "Draw in them infernal boots!"

A double haw-haw of laughter was all the satisfaction he received in reply to his commands, and, Jehu-like, the team dashed ahead until not a house was in sight. The driver then reined in his horses, and began remonstrating with his passengers. They laughed heartily, and handing him half a dollar, bade him be quiet.

"In ten minutes it will be sundown," they added. "You can therefore go into Norwalk in safety."

"But they will pull me up in Darien and fine me when I return," replied the driver.

"Don't be alarmed," was the response; "they can't fine you, for no one can swear you had a passenger. Nothing was seen but a pair of legs, and for aught that can be proved they belonged to a wax figure."

"But they moved," replied the driver, still alarmed.

"So does an automaton," responded Mr. Taylor; "so give yourself no uneasiness, you are perfectly safe."

The driver felt somewhat relieved, but as he passed through

Darien the next day, he had some misgivings. The deacon, however, had probably reached the same conclusion in regard to the rules and nature of evidence as had Mr. Taylor, for no complaint was made, and the driver was permitted to pass unheeded. His fright, however, caused him to notify his employers, that if they ever sent any more passengers to Connecticut on the Sabbath, they might send a driver with them, for he would see them "blowed" before they would catch *him* in another such a scrape.

About the last prosecution which we had in Danbury for a violation of the Sabbath, was in the summer of 1825. There was a drought that season. The grass was withered, the ground was parched, all vegetation was seriously injured, and the streams far and near were partially or wholly dried up. As there were no steam mills in those days, at least in that vicinity, our people found it difficult to get sufficient grain ground for domestic purposes without sending great distances. Our local mills were crammed with the "grists" of all the neighborhood awaiting their turn to be converted into flour or meal. Finally it commenced raining on a Saturday night, and continued all day Sunday. Of course, everybody was delighted. Families who were almost placed upon an "allowance" of bread, were gratified in the belief that the mills would now be set a-going, and that the time of deliverance was at hand. One of our millers, an eccentric individual, and withal a worthy man, knowing the strait in which the community was placed, and remembering that our Saviour permitted his disciples to pluck ears of corn upon the Sabbath, concluded to risk the ire of bigoted sticklers who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel, set his mill in motion on Sunday morning, and had finished many a grist for his neighbors before Monday's sun had arisen.

On Monday afternoon he was arrested on a grand juror's complaint for breaking the Sabbath. He declined employing counsel, and declared himself ready for trial. The court-room was crowded with sympathizing neighbors. The complaint was

“GUILTY — OR NOT GUILTY?”

read, setting forth the enormity of his crime in converting grain into flour on the holy Sabbath — but it did not state the fact that said grinding saved the whole neighborhood from a state of semi-starvation. The defendant maintained a countenance of extreme gravity.

“Are you guilty or not guilty?” asked the man of judicial authority.

“Not guilty — but I ground,” was the reply.

Loud laughter, which the court declared was quite unbecoming the halls of justice, was here indulged by the spectators.

As the act was confessed, no evidence was adduced on the part of the State. Numerous witnesses testified regarding the great drouth, the difficulty in procuring bread from the lack of water to propel the mills, and stated the great necessity of the case. The defendant said not a word, but a verdict of *not guilty* was soon returned. The community generally was delighted, and the ideas that had heretofore existed in that vicinity, that a cat should be punished for catching a mouse on Sunday, or that a barrel of cider should be whipped for “working” on the first day of the week, became obsolete; compelling men to go to “meeting” went out of fashion; in fact, a healthy reaction took place, and from that time the inhabitants of Connecticut became a *voluntary* Sabbath-observing people, abstaining from servile labor and vain recreation on that day, but not deeming it a sin to lift a suffering ox from the pit if he happened to be cast therein after sunset on Saturday, or before sundown on Sunday.

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CHAPTER V

A BATCH OF INCIDENTS

Money-Making — Lotteries — An Attractive Scheme — No Blanks — Small Prizes — Predecessors in Humbug — Cutting Up Bacon — Button Moulds — The Tin Peddler — Trading in Whetstones — The Difference — Death of My Father — A Trade in Bottles — My Lottery — Bottles and Skimmers — Lots of Tin — Doggerel — An Act of "Charity" — Queer Symptoms — Tit for Tat — Trade in Russia — Comedy of Errors — The Fur Flies — The Explanation — Filling Rum-Bottles — The Old Pensioners — The Duel — A Dead Shot.

AMONG the various ways which I had for making money on my own account, from the age of twelve to fifteen years, was that of lotteries. One of our neighbors, a pillar in the church, permitted his son to indulge in that line, the prizes consisting of cakes, oranges, molasses candy, etc.; and the morality of the thing being thus established, I became a lottery manager and proprietor. The highest prize was generally five dollars — sometimes less, and sometimes as high as ten dollars. All the prizes in the lottery amounted to from twelve to twenty-five dollars. The cost of the entire tickets was twenty or twenty-five per cent. more than the prizes. I found no difficulty in disposing of my tickets to the workmen in the hat and comb manufactories, etc.

I had General Hubbard as a predecessor in that business. He was a half-witted old fellow, who wandered about the town living upon the charities of its inhabitants. He was eccentric. One day he called in at Major Hickock's and asked to have his boots soled. When they were finished, Hubbard said to the Major, "I thank you kindly." "Oh, that is more than I ask," said the good-hearted Major. "'Thank you kindly' is two and

THE PLAN ADOPTED

sixpence, and I ask only two shillings." "Well, I'll take the rest in cider," responded Hubbard.

On one occasion he got up a lottery — capital prize ten dollars, tickets twelve and a half cents each. He sold out all his tickets in a few days and pocketed the money. Coming around in those parts a fortnight afterwards, his customers inquired about their prizes. "Oh," replied General Hubbard, "I am convinced this is a species of gambling, so I have concluded not to draw the lottery!" His customers laughed at the joke and lost their shillings.

Lotteries in those days were patronized by both Church and State. As a writer has said, "People would gamble in lotteries for the benefit of a church in which to preach *against* gambling."

In 1819 my grandfather, Phineas Taylor, and three other gentlemen, were appointed managers of a lottery for such a purpose, and they met to concoct a "scheme." My grandfather was anxious to adopt something new, so as, if possible, to make it peculiarly attractive and popular. He finally hit upon a plan which he said he was sure would carry everything before it. It was adopted, and his anticipations were fully realized. The Scheme, as published in the "Republican Farmer," Bridgeport, July 7, 1819, set forth that the lottery was "By Authority of the State of Connecticut," for the benefit of the "Fairfield Episcopal Society," and the inducements held out for the purchase of tickets were as follows:

The Episcopal Society in Fairfield was at the commencement of the Revolutionary War blessed with a handsome Church,¹ completely finished, and painted inside and out, with an elegant set of plate for the communion service, and a handsome Library; also a large and elegant Parsonage-House, with out-houses, fences, &c., which were all destroyed by fire, or carried away at the time the town of Fairfield was burnt, in the year 1779, by the British troops under Tryon, which so impoverished

¹ This was Trinity Church, built in 1738 and standing near the center of the village. See Child: "An Old New England Town"; viii, "The Burning of Fairfield." [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

the Society that they never have been able to reinstate themselves; and, as all other Ecclesiastical Societies, and individuals, who suffered losses by the enemy at that time, have long since, in some measure, been remunerated by the Hon. Legislature; and at their Spring Session, 1818, on the petition of the Wardens and Vestry of the Episcopal Church in Fairfield, to the Hon. General Assembly, they granted a Lottery that might in some measure remunerate them also for their so long omitted claims.

The Scheme itself was considered a novelty, for it announced, "Not a Blank in the Lottery." It was certainly attractive, for while the price of a ticket was five dollars, 11,400 out of a total of 12,000 prizes were set down at \$2.50 each!

This favorable state of things justified the managers in announcing (as they did) that

"A more favorable Scheme for the Adventurer, we presume to say, was never offered to the public. The one now offered contains more high Prizes than Schemes in general of this amount; and it will be observed that a person can obtain two Tickets for the same money that will buy but one in a Scheme of any other description. Consequently the Adventurer will have two chances for the high Prizes to one in any other Lottery."

Never was a lottery so popular, *before it was drawn*, as this. The fear of drawing a *blank* had hitherto been quite a drawback to investments in that line; but here there was "not a blank in the lottery!" Besides, adventurers had "*two chances for the high prizes to one in any other lottery!*" Rather slim chances to be sure, when we observe that there were only *nine* prizes above one hundred dollars, in twelve thousand tickets! One chance in thirteen hundred and thirty-three! But customers did not stop to think of that. Then again, according to the Scheme, "a person can obtain two Tickets for the same money that will buy but one in a Scheme of any other description."

The tickets sold with unparalleled rapidity. Scarcely a per-

A REGULAR OLD CHEAT

son thought of purchasing less than two. He was sure to draw two prizes of \$2.50 each, and at the worst he could lose no more than \$5, the ordinary price of a ticket! All the chances were sold some time previous to the day announced for the commencement of the drawing — a fact unprecedented in the history of lotteries. My grandfather was looked upon as a public benefactor. He sold personally more than half the entire numbers of tickets, and as each manager received a percentage on sales made by himself, there was profit in the operation.

The day of drawing arrived. My grandfather announced each prize as it came from the wheel, and during the twenty-four days required for drawing the twelve thousand numbers at five hundred each day, he called out “two dollars and fifty cents” eleven thousand four hundred times, and various other prizes, all told, only six hundred times!

Persons who had bought two tickets, being sure of losing not more than \$5 at the worst, found themselves losers \$5.75, for as the Scheme announced “all prizes subject to the usual deduction of 15 per cent.,” each \$2.50 prize realized to the holder \$2.12½, “payable in 60 days.”

The whole country was in an uproar. “Uncle Phin” Taylor was unanimously voted a regular old cheat — the scheme, with “not a blank in the lottery,” was denounced as “the meanest scheme ever invented, and nobody but Phin Taylor would have ever thought of such a plan for deceiving the people!” In fact, from that date till the day of his death, he was called “old two dollars and fifty cents,” and many was the hearty laugh which he enjoyed at the thought thereof. As time wore away, he was declared to be the cutest man in those parts, and the public generally became reconciled to consider his famous Scheme as a capital practical joke.

The drawing of a State-Church Lottery (under other managers) was advertised in February, 1823, and “adventurers” were assured of this “farther opportunity of obtaining an easy independence for the small sum of \$5.” The quiet unction of this announcement is peculiarly refreshing. One chance in *only*

twelve thousand! Such bipeds as "humbugs" certainly existed long before I attained my majority.

My grandfather was for many years a justice of the peace, and became somewhat learned in the law. As lawyers were not then so plenty in Connecticut as at present, he was sometimes engaged in pettifogging small cases before a justice. In one occasion he went to Woodbury, Ct., in that capacity. His opponent was Lawyer Bacon, an attorney of some celebrity. Bacon despised the idea of contending against a pettifogger, and seized every opportunity during the trial to annoy my grandfather. If the latter objected to evidence introduced by the former as irrelevant or illegal, Mr. Bacon would remind the court that his adversary was a mere pettifogger, and of course knew nothing about law or the rules of evidence. My grandfather took this all very coolly; indeed it gratified him to annoy the learned counsel on the other side. At last Mr. Bacon became considerably excited, and looking my grandfather directly in the face, he said:

"Your name is Taylor, I believe, sir?"

"It is," was the reply.

"It takes nine tailors to make a man," responded the lawyer triumphantly.

"And your name is Bacon, I think," said my grandfather.

"Yes, sir."

"Bacon is the meanest part of the hog," rejoined the pettifogger.

Even the court joined in the laughter which followed, and at the same time advised Mr. Bacon to refrain in future from remarks which were unnecessary and unbecoming. The learned attorney exhibited a ready willingness in acceding to the request of the judge.

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Dr. Carrington, Esquire James Clarke, and other well-known jokers of Danbury, were the authors of many anecdotes

THE WARY PEDDLER

which I heard in my younger days. The doctor kept a country store. A small farmer coming to trade with him one day, asked him if he took cheese in exchange for goods. "Certainly," was the reply. The farmer brought in a large bag and emptied out eleven very small cheeses. "Only eleven!" said the doctor counting them. "I can't do any thing with them."

"Why not?" asked the farmer.

"There is not a full set — there should be twelve," responded the doctor.

"A full set of what?" inquired the farmer.

"Button moulds, of course," was the reply.

Fortunately the farmer was of a humorous turn and took the joke in good part.

"Tin peddlers," as they were called, were abundant in those days. They travelled through the country in covered wagons, filled with tin ware and small Yankee notions of almost every description, including jewelry, dry goods, pins, needles, etc., etc. They were a sharp set of men, always ready for a trade whether cash or barter, and as they generally were destitute of moral principle, whoever dealt with them was pretty sure to be cheated. Dr. Carrington had frequently traded with them, and had just as frequently been shaved. He at last declared he would never again have any business transaction with that kind of people.

One day a peddler drove up to the doctor's store, and jumping from his wagon went in and told him he wished to barter some goods with him.

The doctor declined trading, quietly remarking that he had been shaved enough by tin peddlers, and would have nothing more to do with them.

"It is very hard to proscribe an entire class because some of its members happen to be dishonest," said the wary peddler, "and I insist on your giving me a trial. I am travelling all through the country, and can get rid of any of your unsaleable goods. So, to give you a fair chance, I will sell you any thing I have in my wagon at my lowest wholesale price, and will

take in exchange any thing you please to pay me from your store at the retail price."

"Your offer seems a fair one," said the doctor, "and I will look over your goods."

He proceeded to the wagon, and seeing nothing that he wanted except a lot of whetstones, of which the peddler had a large quantity, he inquired the price.

"My wholesale price of whetstones is \$3 per dozen," replied the peddler.

"Well, I will take a gross of them," said the doctor.

The twelve dozen whetstones were brought in, counted out, and carefully placed upon a shelf behind the counter.

"Now," said the peddler, "you owe me \$36, for which I am to take such goods as you please at the retail price. Come, doctor, what are you going to pay me in?"

"In whetstones at fifty cents each, which will take just six dozen," replied the doctor gravely, at the same time commencing to count back one half of his purchase.

The peddler looked astonished for a moment, and then bursting into what is termed "a horse laugh," he exclaimed, "Took in, by hokey! Here, doctor, take this dollar for your trouble (handing him the money); give me back my truck, and I'll acknowledge for ever that you are too sharp for a tin peddler!"

The doctor accepted the proposed compromise, and was never troubled by that peddler again.

In those days politics ran high. There were but two parties, Democrats and Federalists. On one election day it was known that in Danbury the vote would be a very close one. Every voter was brought out. Wagons were sent into all parts of the town to bring in the "lame, halt, and blind" to cast their votes. The excitement was at its height, when a slovenly fellow who had just voted was heard to whisper to a friend, "I have voted once, and I would go and vote again if I thought the moderator would not know me."

BAREFOOTED AT THAT

"Go and wash your face, and nobody would know you again," said Uncle Jabez Taylor, who happened to overhear the remark, and who was on the opposite political side.

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My father was brought to his bed with a severe attack of fever in March, and departed this life, I trust for a better world, on the 7th of September, 1825, aged 48 years.

I was then fifteen years of age. I stood by his bedside. The world looked dark indeed, when I realized that I was for ever deprived of my paternal protector! I felt that I was a poor inexperienced boy, thrown out on the wide world to shift for myself, and a sense of forlornness completely overcame me. My mother was left with five children. I was the oldest, and the youngest was only seven years of age. We followed the remains of husband and parent to their resting-place, and returned to our desolate home, feeling that we were forsaken by the world, and that but little hope existed for us this side the grave.

Administrators to the estate were appointed, and the fact was soon apparent that my father had not succeeded in providing any of this world's goods for the support of his family. The estate was declared *insolvent*, and it did not pay fifty cents upon a dollar. My mother, like many widows before her, was driven to many straits to support her little family, but being industrious, economical, and persevering, she succeeded in a few years in redeeming the homestead and becoming its sole possessor. The few dollars which I had accumulated, I had loaned to my father, and held his note therefor, but it was decided that the property of a minor belonged to the father, and my claim was ruled out. I was subsequently compelled to earn as clerk in a store the money to pay for the pair of shoes that were purchased for me to wear at my father's funeral. I can truly say, therefore, that I began the world with nothing, and was barefooted at that.

I remained with Mr. Weed as clerk but a little longer, and then removed to "Grassy Plain," a mile north-west of the village of Bethel, where I engaged with James S. Keeler and Lewis Whitlock, as clerk in their store, at six dollars per month and my board — my mother doing my washing. I soon entered into speculations on my own account, and by dint of economy succeeded in getting a little sum of money ahead. I boarded with Mrs. Jerusha Wheeler and her daughters, Jerusha and Mary. As nearly everybody had a nickname, the two former ladies were called "Rushia" — the old lady being designated "Aunt Rushia." They were an exceedingly nice and worthy family, and made me an excellent home. I chose my uncle Alanson Taylor as my guardian, and was guided by his counsel. I was extremely active as a clerk, was considered a cute trader, and soon gained the confidence and esteem of my employers. I remember with gratitude that they allowed me many facilities for earning money.

On one occasion a peddler called at our store with a large wagon filled with common green glass bottles of various sizes, holding from half a pint to a gallon. My employers were both absent, and I bantered him to trade his whole load of bottles in exchange for goods. Thinking me a greenhorn, he accepted my proposition, and I managed to pay him off in unsaleable goods at exorbitant prices. Soon after he departed, Mr. Keeler returned and found his little store half filled with bottles!

"What under heavens have you been doing?" said he in surprise.

"I have been trading goods for bottles," said I.

"You have made a fool of yourself," he exclaimed, "for you have bottles enough to supply the whole town for twenty years."

I begged him not to be alarmed, and promised to get rid of the entire lot within three months.

"If you can do that," said he, "you can perform a miracle."

I then showed him the list of goods which I had exchanged for the bottles, with the extra prices annexed, and he found

A LOTTERY PROJECT

upon figuring that I bartered a lot of worthless trash at a rate which brought the new merchandise to considerably less than one-half the wholesale price. He was pleased with the result, but wondered what could be done with the bottles. We stowed away the largest portion of them in the loft of our store.

My employers kept what was called a *barter* store. Many of the hat manufacturers traded there and paid us in hats, giving "store orders" to their numerous employees, including journeymen, apprentices, female hat-trimmers, etc., etc. Of course we had a large number of customers, and I knew them all intimately.

I may say that when I made the bottle trade I had a project in my head for selling them all, as well as getting rid of a large quantity of tinware which had been in the store for some years, and had become begrimed with dirt and fly-specks. That project was a *lottery*. On the first wet day, therefore, when there were but few customers, I spent several hours in making up my scheme. The highest prize was \$25, payable in any kind of goods the customer desired. Then I had fifty prizes of \$5 each, designating in my scheme what goods each prize should consist of. For instance, one \$5 prize consisted of one pair cotton hose, one cotton handkerchief, two tin cups, four pint glass bottles, three tin skimmers, one quart glass bottle, six tin nutmeg graters, eleven half-pint glass bottles, etc., etc. — the glass and tinware always forming the greater portion of each prize. I had one hundred prizes of one dollar each, one hundred prizes of fifty cents each, and three hundred prizes of twenty-five cents each. There were one thousand tickets at fifty cents each. The prizes amounted to the same as the tickets — \$500. I had taken an idea from the church lottery, in which my grandfather was manager, and had many prizes of only half the cost of the tickets. I headed the scheme with glaring capitals, written in my best hand, setting forth that it was a "MAGNIFICENT LOTTERY!" "\$25 FOR ONLY 50 CTS.!!" "OVER 550 PRIZES!!!" "ONLY 1000 TICKETS!!!!"

“GOODS PUT IN AT THE LOWEST CASH PRICES!!!!” etc., etc., etc.

The tickets went like wildfire. Customers did not stop to consider the nature of the prizes. Journeymen hatters, boss hatters, apprentice boys, and hat-trimming girls bought tickets. In ten days they were all sold. A day was fixed for the drawing of the lottery, and it came off punctually, as announced.

The next day, and for several days thereafter, adventurers came for their prizes. A young lady who had drawn five dollars would find herself entitled to a piece of tape, a spool of cotton, a paper of pins, sixteen tin skimmers, cups, and nutmeg graters, and a few dozen glass bottles of various sizes! She would beg me to retain the glass and tinware and pay her in some other goods, but was informed that such a proceeding would be contrary to the rules of the establishment and could not be entertained for a moment.

One man would find all his prizes to consist of tinware. Another would discover that out of twenty tickets, he had drawn perhaps ten prizes, and that they consisted entirely of glass bottles. Some of the customers were vexed, but most of them laughed at the joke. The basket loads, the armfuls, and the bags full of soiled tin and glass bottles which were carried out of our store during the first few days after the lottery drawing, constituted a series of most ludicrous scenes. Scarcely a customer was permitted to depart without one or more specimens of tin or green glass. Within ten days every glass bottle had disappeared, and the old tinware was replaced by a smaller quantity as bright as silver.

My uncle Aaron Nichols, husband of my aunt Laura, was a hat manufacturer on a large scale in Grassy Plain. His employees purchased quantities of tickets. He bought twelve, and was very lucky. He drew seven prizes. Unfortunately they were all to be paid in *tin*! He took them home one day in his wagon — looking like a tin peddler as he went through the street. Two days afterwards Aunt Laura brought them all back.

“I have spent six hours,” said she, “in trying to rub some of

this tin bright, but it is impossible. I want you to give me some other goods for it." I told her it was quite out of the question.

"What on earth do you suppose I can do with all this black tin?" said she.

I replied that if my uncle Nichols had the good fortune to draw so many prizes, it would be presumption in me to dictate what use he should make of them.

"Your uncle is a fool, or he would never have bought any tickets in such a worthless lottery," said she.

I laughed outright, and that only added to her vexation. She called me many hard names, but I only laughed in return.

Finally, says I, "Aunt Laura, why don't you take some of your tin over to 'Aunt Rushia'? I heard her inquiring this morning at the breakfast table where she could buy some tin skimmers."

"Well, I can supply her," said my aunt Laura, taking half-a-dozen skimmers and an assortment of other articles in her apron and proceeding at once to my boarding-house across the street.

"Aunt Rushia," said she, as she entered the door, "I have come to sell you some tin skimmers."

"Mercy on us!" exclaimed Aunt Rushia. "I have got skimmers enough."

"Why, Taylor Barnum told me you wanted to buy some," said Aunt Laura in surprise.

"I am afraid that boy is a mischievous young joker," said Aunt Rushia, laughing. "He did that to plague me, for I drew seven skimmers in the lottery."

Aunt Laura returned more vexed than ever. She emptied the whole lot of tin upon the floor of the store, and declared she would never have it in her house again. She returned home.

I immediately dispatched the lot of tin to her house in a wagon. It reached there before she did, and when she entered her kitchen she found the tinware piled up in the middle of the room, with the following specimen of my poetry dangling from the handle of a tin coffee-pot:

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

"There was a man whose name was Nick,
He drew seven prizes very slick;
For the avails he took tinware,
Which caused his wife to fret and swear."

It was several weeks before my aunt Laura forgave me the joke. At about that period, however, she sent me a mince pie nicely covered over in clean white paper, marked on the outside, "A mince pie for Taylor Barnum."

I was delighted. I cut the string which surrounded it and took off the paper. The pie was baked in one of the unwashed tin platters! Of course I could not eat it, but it was an evidence to me of reconciliation, and that afternoon I took tea with my aunt, where I had enjoyed many an excellent meal before, and have done the same thing scores of times since.

My grandfather enjoyed my lottery speculation very much, and seemed to agree with many others, who declared that I was indeed "a chip of the old block."

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On Saturday nights I usually went to Bethel to remain with my mother and attend church on the Sabbath. My mother continued for some years to keep the village tavern. One Saturday evening a violent thunder shower came up; it was very dark, and rained in torrents, with occasional intervals of a few minutes. Miss Mary Wheeler (who was a milliner) sent word across to the store that there was a girl at her house from Bethel, who had come up on horseback to obtain her new bonnet, that she was afraid to return home alone, and if I was going to Bethel on horseback that night, she wished me to escort her customer. I assented, and in a few minutes my horse was at "Aunt Rushia's" door. I went in, and was introduced to a fair, rosy-cheeked, buxom-looking girl, with beautiful white teeth, named "Chairy" Hallett. Of course "Chairy" was a nickname, which I subsequently learned meant "Charity."

AN INTERESTING COMPANION

I assisted the young lady into her saddle, was soon mounted on my own horse, and we trotted slowly towards Bethel.

The brief view that I had of this girl by candle-light, had sent all sorts of agreeable sensations through my bosom. I was in a state of feeling quite new to me, and as unaccountable as it was novel. I opened a conversation with her, and finding her affable and in no degree prim or "stuck-up" (although she was on horseback), I regretted that the distance to Bethel was not five miles instead of one. A vivid flash of lightning at that moment lighted up the horizon, and gave me a fair view of the face of my interesting companion. I then wished the distance was twenty miles at the least. I was not long in learning that she was a tailoress, working with Mr. Zerah Benedict, of Bethel. The tailoring trade stood much higher in my estimation from that moment than it ever did before. We soon arrived at Bethel, and bidding my fair companion good-night, I went to my mother's. That girl's face haunted me in my dreams that night. I saw her the next day at church, and on every subsequent Sunday for some time, but no opportunity offered that season for me to renew the acquaintance.

Messrs. Keeler and Whitlock sold out their store of goods to Mr. Lewis Taylor in the summer of 1827. I remained a short time as clerk for Mr. Taylor. They have a proverb in Connecticut, that "the best school in which to have a boy learn human nature, is to permit him to be a tin peddler for a few years." I think his chances for getting "his eye-teeth cut" would be equally great in a country barter store like that in which I was clerk. As before stated, many of our customers were hatters, and we took hats in payment for goods. The large manufacturers generally dealt pretty fairly by us, but some of the smaller fry occasionally shaved us prodigiously. There probably is no trade in which there can be more cheating than in hats. If a hat was damaged "in coloring" or otherwise, perhaps by a cut of half a foot in length, it was sure to be patched up, smoothed over, and slipped in with others to

send to the store. Among the furs used for the nap of hats in those days, were beaver, Russia, nutria, otter, cony,² muskrat, etc., etc. The best fur was otter, the poorest was cony.

The hatters mixed their inferior furs with a little of their best, and sold us the hats for "otter." We in return mixed our sugars, teas, and liquors, and gave them the most valuable names. It was "dog eat dog" — "tit for tat." Our cottons were sold for wool, our wool and cotton for silk and linen; in fact nearly every thing was different from what it was represented. The customers cheated us in their fabrics: we cheated the customers with our goods. Each party expected to be cheated, if it was possible. Our eyes, and not our ears, had to be our masters. We must believe little that we saw, and less that we heard. Our calicoes were all "fast colors," according to our representations, and the colors would generally run "fast" enough and show them a tub of soap-suds. Our ground coffee was as good as burned peas, beans, and corn could make, and our ginger was tolerable, considering the price of corn meal. The "tricks of trade" were numerous. If a "peddler" wanted to trade with us for a box of beaver hats worth sixty dollars per dozen, he was sure to obtain a box of "conies" which were dear at fifteen dollars per dozen. If we took our pay in clocks, warranted to keep good time, the chances were that they were no better than a chest of drawers for that purpose — that they were like Pindar's razors, "made to sell," and if half the number of wheels necessary to form a clock could be found within the case, it was as lucky as extraordinary.

Such a school would "cut eye-teeth," but if it did not cut conscience, morals, and integrity all up by the roots, it would be because the scholars quit before their education was completed!

On one occasion, a hatter named Walter Dibble called to buy some furs from us. For certain reasons I was anxious to

² "Cony" was the trade term for rabbit fur, which to-day is the principal source of the felt used in the making of hats. [Ed.]

play a joke upon him. I sold him several kinds of fur, including “beaver” and “cony.” He wanted some “Russia.” I told him we had none, but Mrs. Wheeler, where I boarded, had several hundred pounds.

“What on earth is a woman doing with ‘Russia’?” said he.

I could not answer, but I assured him that there were 130 pounds of old Rushia and 150 pounds of young Rushia in Mrs. Wheeler’s house, and under her charge, but whether it was for sale I could not say.

Off he started with a view to make the purchase. He knocked at the door. Mrs. Wheeler, the elder, made her appearance.

“I want to get your Russia,” said the hatter.

Mrs. Wheeler asked him to walk in and be seated. She of course supposed that he had come for her daughter “Rushia.”

“What do you want of Rushia?” asked the old lady.

“To make hats,” was the reply.

“To trim hats, I suppose you mean?” responded Mrs. Wheeler.

“No, for the outside of hats,” replied the hatter.

“Well, I don’t know much about hats,” said the old lady, “but I will call my daughter.”

Passing into another room where “Rushia” the younger was at work, she informed her that a man wanted her to make hats.

“Oh, he means sister Mary, probably. I suppose he wants some ladies’ hats,” replied Rushia, as she passed into the parlor.

“This is my daughter,” said the old lady.

“I want to get your Russia,” said he, addressing the young lady.

“I suppose you wish to see my sister Mary; she is our milliner,” said the young Rushia.

“I wish to see whoever owns the property,” said the hatter.

Sister Mary was sent for, and soon made her appearance. As soon as she was introduced, the hatter informed her that he wished to buy her “Russia.”

"Buy Rushia!" exclaimed Mary in surprise. "I don't understand you."

"Your name is Miss Wheeler, I believe," said the hatter, who was annoyed by the difficulty he met in being understood.

"It is, sir."

"Ah! very well. Is there old and young Russia in the house?"

"I believe there is," said Mary, surprised at the familiar manner in which he spoke of her mother and sister, both of whom were present.

"What is the price of old Russia per pound?" asked the hatter.

"I believe, sir, that old Rushia is not for sale," replied Mary indignantly.

"Well, what do you ask for young Russia?" pursued the hatter.

"Sir," said Miss Rushia the younger, springing to her feet, "do you come here to insult defenceless females? If you do, sir, we will soon call our brother, who is in the garden, and he will punish you as you deserve."

"Ladies!" exclaimed the hatter, in astonishment, "what on earth have I done to offend you? I came here on a business matter. I want to buy some Russia. I was told you had old and young Russia in the house. Indeed, this young lady just stated such to be the fact, but she says the old Russia is not for sale. Now, if I can buy the young Russia I want to do so — but if that can't be done, please to say so and I will trouble you no farther."

"Mother, open the door and let the gentleman pass out; he is undoubtedly crazy," said Miss Mary.

"By thunder! I believe I shall be if I remain here long," exclaimed the hatter, considerably excited. "I wonder if folks never do *business* in these parts, that you think a man is crazy if he attempts such a thing?"

"Business! poor man," said Mary soothingly, approaching the door.

"I am not a poor man, madam," replied the hatter. "My name is Walter Dibble; I carry on hatting extensively in Danbury; I came to Grassy Plain to buy fur, and have purchased some 'beaver' and 'cony,' and now it seems I am to be called 'crazy' and a 'poor man,' because I want to buy a little 'Russia' to make up my assortment."

The ladies began to open their eyes a little. They saw that Mr. Dibble was quite in earnest, and his explanation threw considerable light upon the subject.

"Who sent you here?" asked sister Mary.

"The clerk at the store opposite," was the reply.

"He is a wicked young fellow for making all this trouble," said the old lady. "He has been doing this for a joke," she continued.

"A joke!" exclaimed Dibble, in surprise. "Have you not got any Russia, then?" he asked.

"My name is Jerusha, and so is my daughter's," said Mrs. Wheeler, "and that, I suppose, is what he meant by telling you about old and young Rushia."

Mr. Dibble bolted through the door without a word of explanation and made directly for our store. "You young scamp!" said he, as he entered. "What did you mean by sending me over there to buy Russia?"

"I did not send you to *buy* Rushia. I supposed you were either a bachelor or widower, and wanted to *marry* Rushia," I replied, with a serious countenance.

"You lie, you young dog, and you know it," he replied; "but never mind I'll pay you off for that some day"; and taking his furs, he departed with less ill-humor than could have been expected under the circumstances.

"As drunk as a hatter" has long since passed into a proverb. There were some sober hatters in the times of which I write, but there were also many drinking ones. The hatters from out of town bought their rum by the keg or barrel, while those on Grassy Plain kept a man whose almost sole duty it was to go to

and from the store and shops with half a dozen rum-bottles of various sizes. Some of these bottles were replenished several times in a day. My business, of course, included the filling of rum-bottles. I suppose I have drawn and bottled more rum than would be necessary to float a ship.

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Among our customers were several old Revolutionary pensioners, who usually traded out the amounts of their pensions before they were due, leaving their pension papers with us as security. It was necessary for us, however, in order to obtain the pension money, that the pensioner should appear before the pension agent when his money was due, and sign a receipt therefor. As some of these old men were pretty hard drinkers, it behooved us not to suffer them to trade out all their pension long before it was due, as instances had been known where they had refused to appear and sign their names unless their creditor would present them with a handsome bonus.

The name of one of our pensioners was Bevans. His nickname was "Uncle Bibbins." He loved his glass, and was excessively fond of relating apocryphal Revolutionary adventures. We could hardly name a battle which he had not been in, a fortress which he had not helped to storm, nor any remarkable sight which he had not seen.

"Uncle Bibbins" had nearly used up his pension in trade at our store. We held his papers, but three months were to elapse before he could draw his money. We desired to devise some plan to get him away for that length of time. He had relations in Guilford, and we hinted to him that it would be pleasant for him to spend a few months with his Guilford friends, but he did not seem inclined to go. I finally hit upon an expedient that I thought would effect our design.

A journeyman hatter, named Benton, worked for my uncle Nichols. He was fond of a joke. I induced him to call "Uncle

MUSKETS AT TWENTY YARDS

Bibbins " a coward, tell him he had been wounded in the back, etc., and thus provoke a duel. He did so, and at my suggestion " Uncle Bibbins " challenged Benton to fight him with musket and ball at a distance of twenty yards.

The challenge was accepted, I was chosen second by " Uncle Bibbins," and the duel was to come off immediately. My principal, taking me aside, begged me to put nothing in the guns but blank cartridges. I assured him it should be so, and therefore that he might feel perfectly safe. This gave the old man extra courage, and caused him to brag tremendously. He declared that he had not been so long in bloody battles for nothing, and that he would put a bullet through Benton's heart at the first shot.

The ground was measured in the lot at the rear of our store, and the principals and seconds took their places. At the word given both parties fired. " Uncle Bibbins," of course, escaped unhurt, but Benton leaped several feet into the air, and fell upon the ground with a dreadful yell, as if he had been really shot. " Uncle Bibbins " was frightened. As his second I ran to him, told him that in my hurry to take the ball from Benton's gun, I had by some mistake neglected to extract the bullet from *his*, and that he had undoubtedly killed his adversary. I then whispered to him to go immediately to Guilford, to keep quiet, and he should hear from me as soon as it would be safe to do so. He started up the street on a run, and immediately quit the town for Guilford, where he kept himself quiet until it was time for him to return and sign his papers. I then wrote him that " he could return in safety, that almost miraculously his adversary had recovered from his wound, and now forgave him all, as he felt himself much to blame for having in the first place insulted a man of his known courage."

" Uncle Bibbins " returned, signed the papers, and we obtained the pension money. A few days thereafter he met Benton.

" My brave old friend," said Benton, " I forgive you my terrible wound and long confinement on the very brink of the

grave, and I beg of you to forgive me also. I insulted you without a cause."

"I forgive you freely," said "Uncle Bibbins"; "but," he continued, "you must be careful next time how you insult a dead shot."

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CHAPTER VI

INCIDENTS AND VARIOUS SCHEMES

A Toe-String — Spirit of Speculation — On My Own Hook — Youthful Restlessness — Successful Experiment — Extending Business — Swearing Out the Balance — Seeing the Elephant — Forcing a Settlement — Pettifogging — The Speech Spoiled — My Maiden Plea — Consultation — The Love-Letter — Vinegar and Honey — Poetical Appeal — Tender-lines (A Barnum Pun) — The Compromise — Extravagant Living — A Close Shave — Useful Information — The Lottery Mania — Plot and Counterplot — My Marriage — Housekeeping — Religious Excitement — Sectarian Politics — The "Herald of Freedom" — The Libel Suit — In Jail — The Day of Jubilee — Balancing Accounts.

IN the autumn of 1826 Mr. Oliver Taylor, who had removed from Danbury to Brooklyn, Long Island, a few years previously, offered me the position of clerk in his grocery store. He had also a large comb factory in Brooklyn and a comb store in New York. I accepted Mr. Taylor's offer. The store was at the corner of Sands and Pearl streets.

Many of our customers were early ones, to buy articles for their breakfasts, and I was obliged to rise before daylight. This was so different from my previous habits, that I had much difficulty in waking in the morning. To aid me in my endeavors at diligence, I arranged with a watchman, at two shillings per week, to pull a string which hung out of my chamber-window in the third story, one end being fastened to my big toe.

The arrangement fully answered the purpose, but Mr. Taylor became acquainted with it, through the watchman I believe; and on one occasion there was a more violent pulling than I had bargained for. I howled with pain, ran to the window, and bade the watchman desist, else he would pull my toe off. Not suspecting a trick, I dressed myself, went down stairs,

and discovered that it was only half-past twelve o'clock! It was a long time before I ascertained who my tormentor was, though I might reasonably have suspected Oliver; but after that adventure I managed to wake without assistance, and discharged the watchman *in toto*.

I had not been long in Mr. Taylor's employment before I became conversant with the routine of the business, and the purchasing of all the goods for the store was soon intrusted to me. I bought for cash entirely, and thus was enabled to exercise my judgment in making purchases — sometimes going into all sections of the lower part of the city in search of the cheapest markets for groceries. I also frequently attended the wholesale auctions of teas, sugars, molasses, etc., so that by watching the sales, noting the prices, and recording the names of buyers, I knew what profits they were realizing, and how far I could probably beat them down for cash. At these auctions I occasionally made the acquaintance of several grocers who wanted small lots of the goods offered for sale, and we frequently clubbed together and bid off a lot which, being divided between us, gave each about the quantity he desired, and at a reduced price from what we should have been compelled to pay if the goods had passed into other hands and thus been taxed with another profit.

My employer manifested great interest in me, and treated me with the utmost kindness, but the situation did not suit me. The fact is, there are some persons so constituted that they can never be satisfied to labor for a fixed salary, let it be never so great. I am one of that sort. My disposition is, and ever was, of a speculative character, and I am never content to engage in any business unless it is of such a nature that my profits may be greatly enhanced by an increase of energy, perseverance, attention to business, tact, etc. As therefore I had no opportunity to speculate on my own account in this Brooklyn store, I soon became uneasy. Young as I was (and probably because I was so young), I began to think seriously of going into business for myself, and although I had no capital to start on, sev-

AFFRIGHTED PASSENGERS

eral men of means had offered to furnish the money and join me in business. I was just then at an uneasy age — in a transition state — neither boy nor man — an age when it is of the highest importance that a youth should have some discreet friend and instructor on whose good counsel he can rely. How self-conceited, generally, are boys from sixteen to eighteen years old! They feel that they are fully competent to transact business which persons much older than they, know requires many years' experience. This is the age, too, when the "eighteen-year-old fever" is apt to make fools of young men in other than a business point of view. Boys of this age, and girls of twelve to sixteen, are undoubtedly the most disagreeable persons in the world. They are so wild, so stubborn and self-sufficient, that reflecting parents have great reason for deep anxiety as to the "turn" which they may take.

In the summer of 1827 I caught the small-pox, which, although I had been vaccinated successfully some eight years previously, assumed a very severe type of varioloid. This confined me to the house for several months. The expense attending my sickness made a sad inroad upon my funds. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, I started for home to spend a few weeks in recruiting my health, taking passage on board a sloop for Norwalk. When the passengers, numbering twenty ladies and gentlemen, came on board, they were frightened at the appearance of my face, which still bore strong marks of the disease from which I had just recovered. By an unanimous vote I was requested to go on shore, and Captain Munson Hoyt, whom I well knew, having been in the habit of visiting his sloop weekly for the purchase of butter, eggs, etc., informed me that he was pained in conveying to me the wishes of the affrighted passengers. Of course I felt compelled to comply, and left the sloop with a heavy heart. I lodged that night at Holt's old hotel in Fulton street, and the next morning went to Norwalk by steamboat, reaching Bethel the same afternoon.

I spent several weeks with my mother, who was unremitting in her exertions to make me comfortable. During my convales-

cence I visited my old schoolmates and neighbors generally, and had several opportunities of slightly renewing the short acquaintance which I had formed with the attractive tailoress "Chairy" Hallett while escorting her on horseback, from Grassy Plain to Bethel in the thunder shower. These opportunities did not lessen the regard which I felt for the young lady, nor did they serve to render my sleep any sounder. However, "I did not tell my love" and the "worm in the bud" did not feed on my "pock-marked cheek."

At the end of four weeks I again left the maternal roof and departed for Brooklyn. In a short time I made arrangements for opening a porter-house on my own hook, in the neighborhood of the grocery store; and, giving Mr. Taylor the requisite notice of my desire to leave his employment, he engaged a practised hand as my successor, and I opened the porter-house. Within a few months I found an opportunity of selling out to advantage, and as I had a good offer to engage as clerk in a similar establishment kept by Mr. David Thorp, 29 Peck Slip, New York, I sold out and removed thither. Mr. Thorp's place was a great resort of the Danbury and Bethel comb-makers, hatters, etc., and this giving me a constant opportunity of seeing my townsmen, made it very agreeable. I boarded in Mr. Thorp's family, who used me very kindly. He allowed me frequent opportunities of visiting the theatre with such of my companions as came to New York. I had much taste for the drama — soon became, in my own opinion, a close critic, and did not fail to exhibit my powers in this respect to all the juveniles from Connecticut who accompanied me to the theatre.

My habits generally were not bad. Although constantly engaged in selling liquor to others, I probably never drank a pint of liquor, wine, or cordials, before I was twenty-two years of age. I always attended church regularly, and was never without a Bible in my trunk, which I took frequent occasion to read.¹

¹ In "Struggles and Triumphs" (Hartford, 1869), this passage was further developed thus: "I always had a Bible, which I frequently read, and I attended church regularly. These habits, so far as they go, are in the right direction, and I

TRAINING DAY

In February, 1828, my grandfather wrote me that if I would come to Bethel and establish some kind of business for myself, he would allow me to occupy, rent free, one half of his carriage-house. I had a strong desire to return to my native village, and after several weeks' reflection I accepted his offer.

The carriage-house referred to was situated on the public street in Bethel, and I concluded to finish off one part of it, and open a retail fruit and confectionery store. Before leaving New York, I consulted several fruit dealers with whom I was acquainted, and made arrangements for sending them my orders. I then went to Bethel, arranged the building, put in a small stock of goods, including a barrel of ale, and opened my establishment on the first Monday morning in May, 1828, that being our military training day.

The hopes and fears which agitated me for weeks previously to this my first grand opening, have probably never had a parallel in all my subsequent adventures. I was worth about one hundred and twenty dollars, and I invested all I possessed in this enterprise. It cost me fifty dollars to fit up my little store, and seventy dollars more purchased my stock in trade. I am suspicious that I received little good from attending church the day previously to opening my store, for I distinctly remember being greatly exercised in mind for fear it would rain the next day, and thus diminish the number of customers for my cakes, candies, nuts, raisins, etc.

I was up betimes on Monday morning, and was delighted to find the weather propitious. The country people began to flock into the village at an early hour, and the novelty of my little shop, which was set out in as good style as I was capable of, attracted their attention. I soon had plenty to do, and before noon was obliged to call in one of my old school-mates to assist

am thankful to-day that they characterized my early youth. However worthy or unworthy may have been my later years, I *know* that I owe much of the better part of my nature to my youthful regard for Sunday and its institutions — a regard, I trust, still strong in my character." [Ed.]

me in waiting upon my numerous customers. Business continued brisk during the whole day and evening, and when I closed I had the satisfaction of counting out sixty-three dollars as my day's receipts! My entire barrel of ale was sold, but the assortment of other goods was not broken up, nor apparently very seriously diminished, so that although I had received the entire cost of my goods, less seven dollars, the stock on hand showed that my profits had been excellent.

I need not attempt to relate how gratified I was by the result of my first day's experiment. I considered my little store as a "fixed fact" and such it proved to be. I put in another barrel of ale, and proceeding to New York, expended all of my money for a small stock of fancy goods, and such articles as I thought would find a ready sale. My assortment included pocket-books, combs, beads, cheap finger-rings, pocket-knives, and a few toys. My business continued good during the summer, and in the fall I added stewed oysters to my assortment.

My grandfather had great pleasure in my success, and advised me to take the agency of some lottery dealer for the sale of lottery tickets on commission. Lotteries were at that time legal in Connecticut, and were generally considered as legitimate a branch of business as any other.² I therefore adopted my grandfather's advice, and obtained an agency for selling lottery tickets on a commission of ten per cent. This business, connected with the fruit, confectionery, oyster, and toy establishment, rendered my profits quite satisfactory.

On one occasion a young man of my acquaintance called to

² The "Struggles and Triumphs" version (1869) reads: "In those days, the lottery was not deemed objectionable on the score of morality. Very worthy people invested in such schemes without a thought of evil, and then, as now, churches even got up lotteries, with this difference—that then they were called lotteries, and now they go under some other name. While I am very glad that an improved public sentiment denounces the lottery in general as an illegitimate means of getting money, and while I do not see how any one, especially in or near a New England State, can engage in a lottery without feeling a reproach which no pecuniary return can compensate; yet I cannot now accuse myself for having been lured into a business which was then sanctioned by good Christian people." . . . [Ed.]

CROFUT AND "HACK" BAILEY

examine some pocket-books. He inquired the prices, and finally selected one that pleased him. He said he would take it, but he desired me to give him a credit on it for a few weeks. I told him that had he wanted any article of necessity which I had for sale, I would not object to trusting him a short time, but it struck me that a pocket-book was something of a superfluity for a person who had no money. He replied that it did not strike him in that light, and that he did not see why it was not as proper to seek credit for a pocket-book as for any thing else. He however failed to convince me of the necessity of his possessing such an article until he had something to put into it, and I therefore declined his proposition.

My little store became a favorite resort for the men in our village, and many is the good practical joke that was enacted there.

Danbury is situated about eight miles east of the line which separates the State of Connecticut from that of New York. Several eccentric individuals from "York State" were in the habit of visiting Bethel. Among these was a gray-headed old miller whom I will call Crofut. Another was Mr. Hackariah Bailey, always for short called "Hack" Bailey.³ Crofut was a very profane man. Almost every other word was an oath. He had become so confirmed in a habit of swearing, that he was quite unaware of the extent of his profanity. He was a man of wealth. He generally visited Bethel to dispose of wheat-flour, bringing it in bags piled up to the very top of a large wagon, drawn by a pair of splendid horses. Crofut and Bailey were both self-willed men. When their minds were made up, there was no turning them. Hack Bailey was a showman. He imported the first elephant that was ever brought to this country, and made a fortune by exhibiting it. He was afterwards extensively engaged in travelling menageries, and subsequently was very successful in running opposition steamboats upon the

³ This is the spelling of the 1855 text. The name is correctly "Hachaliah." [Ed.]

North River. He built a fine hotel in Somers, N. Y., the place of his residence, called it the Elephant Hotel, and erected a large stone pillar in front of it, on which he placed a golden elephant.⁴

One day, Crofut was in my little store, engaged in conversation with many of our neighbors, who were always sure to congregate about him whenever he came to the village. His language as usual partook largely of the profane. Nathan Seelye, Esq., one of our village justices of the peace, who was a strict man in his religious principles, came in, and hearing the conversation told Mr. Crofut that he considered it his duty to fine him one dollar for swearing.

Crofut responded immediately with an oath, that he did not care a d——n for the Connecticut blue-laws.

"That will make two dollars," said Mr. Seelye.

This brought forth another oath.

"Three dollars," said the sturdy justice.

Nothing but oaths were given in reply, until Esquire Seelye declared the damage to the Connecticut laws to amount to fifteen dollars.

Crofut took out a twenty-dollar bill, and handed it to the justice of the peace, with an oath.

"Sixteen dollars," said Mr. Seelye, counting out four dollars to hand to Mr. Crofut, as his change.

"Oh, keep it, keep it," said Crofut, "I don't want any change, I'll d——n soon swear out the balance" — and he did so, after which he was more circumspect in his conversation,

⁴ Bailey did not import "Old Bet" but purchased her after her arrival. She was not the first elephant seen in the United States; for she did not appear until 1815, whereas the "New Commercial Advertiser" (New York), in its issue for April 23, 1796 (and subsequently), carried an advertisement of the exhibition, at the corner of Beaver street and Broadway, of an elephant lately arrived from Bengal. It is, however, true that Hachaliah Bailey, with his itinerant pachyderm, gave the original impulse to the American circus; and the earliest American traveling shows went out from the region around Somers. — Bailey died on September 2, 1845, aged seventy. The handsome Georgian hotel that he opened about 1825 and the monument topped by a wooden elephant, once gilded, are still (1926) in existence. [Ed.]

“ELEPHANT STOCK ENOUGH”

remarking that twenty dollars a day for swearing was about as much as he could stand.

“Hack” Bailey, after making many thousand dollars by the exhibition of his elephant, concluded to take the world a little easier, and in order to avoid the necessity of travelling any more through the country, he sold one half of his interest in the animal to a showman, who agreed to exhibit the elephant and account to Hack for one half the receipts.

After the partner had been absent some weeks, Hack began to look with some anxiety for a remittance. Nothing came, however, and he wrote to his partner to inquire the cause. He received no reply. At last, becoming impatient, he took the stage to Boston, and in the course of a few days overtook his partner at New Bedford, Mass. Hack asked him why he had not remitted his portion of the profits. He was assured, in reply, that there were no profits, that the expenses swallowed them all, etc.

Hack knew better than this, for he had heard that the elephant had drawn large crowds wherever he⁵ went, and he saw that many hundreds of persons visited the exhibition in New Bedford. He therefore insisted on a settlement.

“I will settle with you when I return next fall; I have no time now,” replied the stubborn partner.

This reply strengthened Hack’s conviction that his chance for the profits under the present management was a very slim one. He then offered to sell his interest in the elephant to his partner.

“I have elephant stock enough now,” was the reply.

“Well, I will buy out your interest,” said Hack.

“No, I thank you, I don’t care about selling; I am very well satisfied as it is.”

“But I am not,” replied Hack, “and I won’t stand it. You shall not travel any longer in charge of this elephant as long as I own any interest in him.”

⁵ Throughout this anecdote, “Old Bet” is mistakenly referred to as “he.”
[Ed.]

"I would like to see you prevent it. Our written contract stipulates that I am to have charge of the elephant, and next fall we are to settle up," replied the partner.

"But it also stipulates that you are to remit me one half of the profits as fast as they accrue," replied Hack.

"Yes, and no faster. I tell you there are no profits," responded the partner.

Hack grew more indignant. "Will you sell your half of the elephant?" he asked.

"No," was the reply.

"Will you buy my half?"

"No."

"Then you go no farther with the animal," replied Hack.

"I know the law, and defy you to try it," responded the partner.

"I'll try something that will be effectual, as I am a living man," said Hack, who now felt the lion fairly aroused within him.

"Try what you please," was the reply.

The next morning at daylight the partner went to the barn to take the elephant, which was to be led to the next town. He found Hack Bailey standing at the elephant's side with a loaded rifle.

"Don't you touch that animal quite yet," said Hack, raising his rifle.

"Mr. Bailey, do you mean to kill me?" cried the affrighted partner.

"No, sir," replied Mr. Bailey, "I mean to do nothing but what is lawful. I came here to get my rights. You refuse them to me. You ought to know me better than to suppose you can impose upon me any longer. You have refused to buy or sell—now you may do what you please with your half of that elephant, but I am fully determined *to shoot my half!*"

The man knew that there was no back-out in the character of Hack Bailey, and he saw also that he was never more in

REPRESENTING THE STATE

earnest in his life. Hack raised the rifle to his shoulder and pointed it towards the elephant.

"Stop, stop, and I'll settle," exclaimed the partner with a look of horror.

"Oh, no, you won't," said Hack, proceeding to take aim.

"I will, upon honor," was the earnest reply.

Hack lowered his rifle, and within half an hour afterwards he had sold his half of the elephant to his partner for a good round price, and the animal thus escaped having the life taken out of at least one half of him.

My grandfather, being a justice of the peace, frequently had to sit in judgment upon civil and criminal suits. On one occasion a man was arrested on a grand jury complaint for assault and battery. The case was to be tried before my grandfather. A young medical student named Newton was boarding at my mother's, and he volunteered to defend the prisoner. Of course pettifogging was new business to Newton, but he thought it would be a good chance to show off his talents to our villagers. Mr. Couch, the grand-jury man, came to me and said that inasmuch as a pettifogger was engaged by the prisoner, he thought the State ought to have some person to defend its interest, and he would give me a dollar if I would go in and argue the case of the State before the justice. Nothing loth, I accepted the proposition and received my fee in advance.

The fact of two such "eminent counsel" being engaged, drew in crowds from the hat shops and other portions of the village. The guilt of the prisoner was established by the direct evidence of half a dozen witnesses, and as no testimony was offered on his part there was no more need of arguing the case, than there would be to attempt to enlighten the court regarding the fact that noonday is lighter than midnight.

However, young Newton was in for the fight, and he arose with no small degree of dignity and addressed the court with "May it please the honorable court," etc. On he went with a string of rigmarole, quoting largely from Shakespeare, and re-

peating unknown quantities of poetry, occasionally alluding to the situation of "the persecuted defendant, the prisoner at the bar, and the cruel vindictiveness of the plaintiff," pointing his finger disdainfully at the grand-jury man. My grandfather maintained the utmost gravity for about half an hour, at which time Newton, in the middle of what he intended to be a splendid peroration, having for probably the twentieth time pointed to Mr. Couch (the grand-jury man) as the plaintiff, was interrupted by the court. Newton felt excessively annoyed that he should be stopped at the precise moment that he was about to give the master-stroke to his grand conclusion.

"What is the pleasure of the honorable court?" asked Newton, in a tone of vexation.

"You should understand, as the pleasure of the court, that that gentleman is not the plaintiff in the case," answered the judge.

"Not the plaintiff! Then may it please your honor, I should like to know who *is* the plaintiff?" said Newton, sarcastically.

"If I had followed your argument it would have been rather a difficult matter to determine, and I was afraid if I allowed you to continue your high-flown poetical language much farther, none of us would have been able to make out who the plaintiff is; but I believe I heard from the grand-jury man that it was the State of Connecticut!" replied my grandfather, with a bland smile.

Poor Newton dropped into his chair as suddenly as if he had been struck by a twenty-four pounder.

A titter ran through the crowd at Newton's discomfiture, and I, who had been busy taking notes during the speech, now arose with great confidence, and after hitting Newton a rap over the knuckles, proceeded to examine the evidence and urge its demonstrative proof of the guilt of the prisoner. I bore upon the fact that every witness had seen the transaction, and all agreed in their statements. I further urged, that nothing in the cross-examination had been discovered to clash with that of the direct testimony — that no attempt had been made

to impeach either of the witnesses — that no testimony whatever had been offered on the part of the defence — that not the slightest shadow of a doubt of the guilt of the prisoner could possibly exist — that I was astonished at the indiscretion and audacity of both prisoner and counsel in not pleading guilty in the first place. Warming with my subject, I soared aloft into space, where, after indulging in numerous grandiloquent manœuvres, I began to look down from my giddy height with some trepidation, lest I should not make a safe descent, when all at once my grandfather interrupted me.

“Young man,” said he, “will you have the kindness to inform the court which side you are pleading for — the plaintiff or the defendant?”

I dropped in an instant, amid a tremendous shout of laughter from every portion of the court-room. Newton had been sitting with a downcast look ever since his discomfiture, but on the principle that “misery loves company” he now looked up with a broad grin upon his features. I did not exactly relish the joke, and informed my grandfather that I thought he might have had some little regard for the sanctity of a court of justice, but he gave me no satisfactory reply. After order was restored, the prisoner was bound over to the next County Court for trial, and the new members of the bar were both glad to sneak out of the room with all reasonable celerity.

. . .

My business in Bethel continued to increase beyond my anticipations, and I was very happy in believing that my suit was prospering with Charity Hallett, the fair tailoress. Although I associated with all the young people, and attended their parties, picnics, sleigh-rides, etc., Chairy continued to stand highest in my estimation, and to improve upon acquaintance.

The manner in which I made arrangements for one of our sleighing parties, may be worth narrating. My grandfather, who kept a number of horses and vehicles, always had one at

my disposal. He had one favorite horse, however, which he called the "Arabian," that he never permitted anybody to use except himself. He also had a new sleigh — the finest in the village, but unfortunately for me an embargo was likewise laid upon that. His other sleigh was a very good one, but I coveted the new one, as well as the Arabian horse. I knew that with such a turnout I could eclipse all our village beaux; but indulgent as my grandfather usually was to me, I had no reasonable hopes of inducing him to break through his fixed rules for my accommodation. I thought, however, there would be no harm in trying. I therefore called on him.

"Grandfather," said I, "I want to procure a horse and sleigh to go on a sleighing party next Tuesday."

"Very well, you can have them," was the reply.

"Can I have Arabian and the new sleigh?" I asked with some hesitation.

"Yes, if you have twenty dollars in your pocket!" he replied with much surprise.

I pulled out my wallet, showed him that I had the amount of money which he named, and placing it again in the wallet, returned it to my pocket, exclaiming with a laugh, "There, you see I have the twenty dollars. I am much obliged to you. I suppose I can have Arab and the new sleigh?"

The old gentleman had of course intended to intimate that I should pay him twenty dollars if I took his favorite team, considering that to be equivalent to a denial, but I had turned so suddenly upon him, he was taken by surprise, and relishing a good joke even at his own expense, he replied with a chuckle, "Yes, you may have them, but use them carefully."

I promised a ready compliance and on Tuesday "Chairy" and I had the crack team of the day.

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. .

One Saturday evening, a young man, an apprentice to the tailoring trade in Bethel, whose education had been somewhat

neglected, and whom I will call John Mallett, told me that he wished me to write a love-letter for him after I had closed the store. As I was somewhat of a novice in that line of business, I asked "Bill" Shepard, a worthy young man of about my own age, to remain and assist in the great production.

At nine o'clock I closed the store, and after all had departed except Shepard, Mallett, and myself, we arranged the lights, pens, ink, and paper, and asked Mallett to state his case.

It seemed that he had been very successful hitherto in paying his attentions to a young lady whom I shall call Lucretia. He had at times "cut out" nearly all the boys of the village, with Miss Lucretia; in fact, I was one of the number thus made to stand behind, when Mallett was about. But now, after exhibiting a constancy of about six months' duration, she had shown strong symptoms of jilting the favorite, Mallett. On the Sunday evening previously, she had, very much to his astonishment, declined to "take his arm" when coming out of church, and immediately thereafter took the first young man's arm that was offered her. Mallett was now bent upon receiving from Lucretia an explanation of her unaccountable conduct, and he was determined, at the same time, to give her a piece of his mind. He desired us therefore to begin the letter in strong terms.

We commenced as follows — Shepard acting as scribe:

BETHEL, —, 18—.

Miss Lucretia: — I write this to ask an explanation of your conduct in giving me the mitten on Sunday night last. If you think, madam, that you can trifle with my affections, and turn me off for every little whipper-snapper that you can pick up, you will find yourself considerably mistaken. [We read thus far to Mallett, and it met his approval. He said he liked the idea of calling her "madam," for he thought it sounded so "distant," it would hurt her feelings very much. The term "little whipper-snapper" also delighted him. He said he guessed that would make her feel cheap. Shepard and myself were not quite so sure of its aptitude, since the chap who succeeded in capturing Lucretia, on

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the occasion alluded to, was a head and shoulders taller than Mallett. However, we did not intimate our thoughts to Mallett, and he desired us to "go ahead and give her another dose."] You don't know me, madam, if you think you can snap me up in this way. I wish you to understand that I can have the company of girls as much above you as the sun is above the earth, and I won't stand any of your impudent nonsense nohow. [This was duly read and approved. "Now," said Mallett, "try to touch her feelings. Remind her of the pleasant hours we have spent together," and we continued as follows:] My dear Lucretia, when I think of the many pleasant hours we have spent together — of the delightful walks which we have had on moonlight evenings to Fenner's Rocks, Chestnut Ridge, Grassy Plain, Wildcat, and Puppy-town — of the strolls which we have taken upon Shelter Rocks, Cedar Hill — the visits we have made to Old Lane, Wolfpits, Toad-hole, and Plum Trees * — when all these things come rushing on my mind, and when, my dear girl, I remember how often you have told me that you loved me better than anybody else, and I assured you my feelings were the same as yours, it almost breaks my heart to think of last Sunday night. ["Can't you stick in some affecting poetry here? " said Mallett. Shepard could not recollect any to the point, nor could I, but as the exigency of the case seemed to require it, we concluded to manufacture a verse or two, which we did as follows:]

Lucretia, dear, what have I done,
That you should use me thus and so,
To take the arm of Tom Beers' son,
And let your dearest true-love go?

Miserable fate, to lose you now,
And tear this bleeding heart asunder!
Will you forget your tender vow?
I can't believe it — no, by thunder!

[Mallett did not like the word "thunder," but being informed that no other word could be substituted without destroying both rhyme and reason, he consented that it should remain, provided we added two more stanzas of a *softer* nature; something, he said, that would make the tears come, if possible. We then ground out the following:]

* These were the euphonious names of localities in the vicinity of Bethel.

A CRUST OF BREAD AND THOU

Lucretia, dear, do write to Jack,
And say with Beers you are not smitten,
And thus to me in love come back,
And give all other boys the mitten.

Do this, Lucretia, and till death
I'll love you to intense distraction;
I'll spend for you my every breath,
And we will live in satisfaction.

[“That will do very well,” said Mallett. “Now I guess you had better blow her up a little more.” We obeyed orders as follows:] It makes me mad to think what a fool I was to give you that finger-ring and bosom-pin, and spend so much time in your company, just to be flirted and bamboozled as I was on Sunday night last. If you continue this course of conduct, we part for ever, and I will thank you to send back that jewelry. I would sooner see it crushed under my feet than worn by a person who abused me as you have done. I shall despise you for ever if you don't change your conduct towards me, and send me a letter of apology on Monday next. I shall not go to meeting to-morrow, for I would scorn to sit in the same meeting-house with you until I have an explanation of your conduct. If you allow any young man to go home with you to-morrow night, I shall know it, for you will be watched. [“There,” said Mallett, “that is pretty strong. Now I guess you had better touch her feelings once more, and wind up the letter.” We proceeded as follows:] My sweet girl, if you only knew the sleepless nights which I have spent during the present week, the torments and sufferings which I endure on your account; if you could but realize that I regard the world as less than nothing without you, I am certain you would pity me. A homely cot and a crust of bread with my adorable Lucretia would be a paradise, where a palace without you would be a shades. [“What in thunder is shades?” inquired Jack. We explained. He considered the figure rather bold, and requested us to close as soon as possible.] Now, dearest, in bidding you adieu, I implore you to reflect on our past enjoyments, look forward with pleasure to our future happy meetings, and rely upon your affectionate Jack in storm or calm, in sickness, distress, or want, for all these will be powerless to change my love. I hope to hear from you on Monday next, and, if favorable, I

shall be happy to call on you the same evening, when in ecstatic joy we will laugh at the past, hope for the future, and draw consolation from the fact that "the course of true love never did run smooth." This from your disconsolate but still hoping lover and admirer, JACK MALLETT.

P. S. On reflection I have concluded to go to meeting to-morrow. If all is well, hold your pocket-handkerchief in your left hand as you stand up to sing with the choir — in which case I shall expect the pleasure of giving you my arm to-morrow night. J. M.

I am sorry to say that Lucretia was not overpowered by this letter, which was handed to her early on Sunday morning. She held her handkerchief firmly in her right hand during all the church services, and on Monday morning returned the "ring and bosom-pin" to her disconsolate admirer. Beers' son carried off the palm, and the following year led Lucretia to the altar.

Mallett had agreed to give me five pounds of carpet rags for my mother, and to deliver twelve yards of broadcloth "lists" to Shepard, as a remuneration for our services; but owing to his ill success with Lucretia, he begged off, and we compromised by accepting one-half the amount promised.

During this season I made arrangements with Mr. Samuel Sherwood, of Bridgeport, to go on an exploring expedition to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, where we understood there was a fine opening for a lottery office and where we meant to try our fortunes, provided the prospects should equal our expectations. We went to New York where I had an interview with Mr. Dudley S. Gregory, the principal business man of Messrs. Yates and McIntyre, who dissuaded me from going to Pittsburg, and offered me the entire lottery agency for the State of Tennessee, if I would go to Nashville and open an office. The offer was tempting, but the distance was too far from a certain tailoress in Bethel. I therefore declined giving an answer for two weeks. In the mean time, Sherwood and myself having given up the Pittsburg trip, concluded to go to Philadelphia for a pleasure excursion. We went in a morning boat to New

Brunswick, where the passengers all took stages to Bordentown, a distance of perhaps thirty miles through the sand, where we again took steamboat to Philadelphia, arriving there about dusk. We put up at Congress Hall in Chestnut street, where we experienced rather taller living than we had ever before met with. The array of waiters, napkins, and other et ceteras, as well as a frequent change of plates, was something entirely ahead of all our former experience; but we lay off like old stagers, and lived in clover for a week, going to the theatre every night, and riding in our coach every day. On Sunday, we listened to the chiming bells of Christ Church with great satisfaction, it being the first we had ever heard. At last we concluded to start for home. Our hotel bill astonished us beyond measure, and awakened serious apprehensions in regard to our ability to raise sufficient funds to reach home. Counting up both our piles, we found that our fears were not without foundation. We had been foolishly extravagant in our outlays, and after paying our hotel bills and securing our tickets for New York, we had only twenty-seven cents left!

This was decidedly a close shave. Fortunately we discovered our dilemma before breakfast, and as that meal had been included in our bill, each of us embraced the opportunity, while sipping our coffee, to pocket a few biscuits, which sufficed us for a dinner we could not buy.

As we were about leaving the hotel, the boot-black asked us to remember him, to which Sherwood replied that it was an imposition: he had always while travelling been accustomed to have his boot-blackening included in the bill, and he would not stand it. I tried to look indignant also, but was overcome, and putting my hand in my pocket, drew forth a quarter dollar, and handed it to the polisher of our "understandings." This reduced our capital to two cents, and with this we started, saying to the porter that, merely for the sake of the exercise, we preferred to carry our own trunks.

Living all day upon our biscuits and cold water, we reached New York, and carried our baggage to Holt's Hotel in Fulton

street, a distance of about a mile. In the morning, Sherwood borrowed a couple of dollars from a Bridgeport friend, and proceeding to Newark, obtained the loan of fifty dollars from his friend and cousin Dr. Sherwood. He loaned me one-half the amount, and after sojourning a few days in New York, we returned home. I do not know what Sherwood's feelings were, but I was forcibly reminded, as I have often been since, of the old adage, that "a fool and his money are soon parted."

Our visit to the New York lottery managers greatly enlightened me in regard to the profits of that line of business. I had been in the habit of selling tickets for Washington Yale, the editor and printer in Danbury, also for O. W. Sherwood and his cousin Samuel of Bridgeport, for a commission of 10 to 15 per cent.; but in my interviews with Mr. Gregory, I learned that the managers, taking to themselves the fifteen per cent. deducted on all prizes, furnished tickets to their agents at what was called "scheme price," which allowed the agents from 25 to 30 per cent. profit. The lotteries being drawn by combination numbers, the public generally had no knowledge whatever of the number of tickets in a lottery; the managers, therefore, made the prizes amount to less than the retail price of tickets by 25 or 30 per cent. This extra percentage was a shave additional to the 15 per cent. allowed in old-fashioned lotteries. I also learned that the process of arriving at the number of tickets in a lottery is this: Multiply the three highest combination numbers and divide by six; the quotient is the number of tickets.

. .

After learning the *profitable* basis of the foregoing facts, I went to our Connecticut lottery managers, and from that time obtained my tickets directly from them at "the scheme price." In my turn I established agents all through the country, and my profits were immense. I sold from five hundred to two thousand dollars' worth of tickets per day. About this time my

A "LUCKY OFFICE"

uncle Alanson Taylor joined me as a partner in the lottery business, and proved a very efficient salesman.

. . .

Selling so many tickets as I did, a prize of one or two thousand dollars, and numerous smaller ones, must occasionally turn up. These, being duly trumpeted, rendered mine the "lucky office" in the estimation of many. I received orders from distant parts of the country by mail, and sent out tickets on commission by post-riders and others. Among my "private customers" were a number of clergymen and deacons; and occasionally some of the weak brothers of the Shakers, who came to Bethel to sell garden seeds, bought a few lottery tickets "on the sly."

Whenever I visited Brookfield I called on one man who was of a serious turn. He and his wife were professors of religion, and he was a frequent exhorter at prayer meetings. He always managed to buy a ticket or two from me, under the strictest injunction never to divulge the fact to his wife. I usually dined with him; and when he was busy looking after my horse, or otherwise engaged out of doors, I never failed to sell a ticket to his wife, who begged me to be very careful not to let her husband have any suspicion of it, for he was opposed to such things, and would never forgive her if he should know there was a lottery ticket in the house.

I still kept a close eye upon the attractive tailoress, Charity Hallett; and although my good mother and some other relatives feared that I was not looking high enough in the world, those who knew the girl best declared that she was an industrious, excellent, sensible, and well-behaved girl, and some of them added that "she was altogether too good for Taylor Barnum." I perfectly agreed with them in their conclusions, and in the summer of 1829 I proved it by asking her hand in marriage. My suit was accepted, and the wedding day appointed. In the mean time I applied myself closely to business, no person sus-

pecting that the "event" was near at hand. In October my "sweetheart" went to New York, ostensibly to visit her uncle, Nathan Beers, who resided at No. 3 Allen street. I left home on Saturday, November 7, for New York, having particular occasion to purchase goods for our little store. On the next evening, by the aid of the Rev. Dr. McAuley, and in the presence of sundry relatives and friends of hers, the tailoress changed her name to Mrs. Charity Barnum, and I became the husband of one of the best women that was ever created.

I was at that time little more than nineteen years of age. I have long felt assured, that had I waited twenty years longer, I could not have found another woman so well suited to my disposition, and so valuable as a wife, a mother, and a friend, yet I do not approve of nor recommend too early marriages. Young persons' minds should become more matured before they venture to decide upon the most important event which can occur to them in a lifetime. Marriage has been called "a lottery," "taking a leap in the dark," etc. It is, to say the least, a serious ordinance, deserving serious thought. Hasty marriage, and especially the marriage of boys and girls, has, in my opinion, been the cause of untold misery in thousands of instances, the advice of that worthy old philosopher Ben Franklin to the contrary notwithstanding.

The bride and bridegroom returned to Bethel the same week, and took board in the family where she had previously resided. My mother received me as if nothing had happened, and made no allusion to the wedding. She evidently felt chagrined at the clandestine manner of my marriage; but I called on her every day with the same freedom that I had ever done, and within a month she invited me to bring "my wife" and spend the following Sabbath with her. I did so; and from that day to this, I am sure that neither she nor any other person ever said or believed that I had not been extremely fortunate in the selection of my companion.

“ THE YELLOW STORE ”

In the winter of 1829-30, I opened a lottery office in the village of Danbury, still keeping up the Bethel office, as well as branches in Norwalk, Stamford, Middletown, etc., and a host of small agencies all through the country, for thirty miles around. In June, 1830, I purchased from my grandfather three acres of land in Bethel, a few rods south of the village, for the purpose of erecting a dwelling thereon. Lewis Osborne, the builder, put me up a two-and-a-half-story house, 26 by 30 feet, for ten hundred and fifty dollars, and my wife and myself moved into it and commenced housekeeping the ensuing spring.

My ticket sales were now confined in a great measure to a few large customers, who bought liberally, and to whom I gave a credit. Leaving these “large customers” in the hands of a trusty clerk, I went into a book speculation for a couple of months. I purchased books at auction and otherwise in New York, and taking them around the country, advertised and sold them at auction, I acting as auctioneer. I did tolerably well, with two exceptions. I held my auction one night at Litchfield, Ct. The law school was located there at that time.⁶ The students were among my customers, and they managed to steal a large number of the most costly books. The same thing was done in Newburgh, N. Y., and I quit the auction business in disgust.

In the same spring of 1831, I put up a building in Bethel, known as “the yellow store,” making it sufficiently capacious to accommodate a family in the second and third stories. In July, 1831, my uncle Alanson and myself opened the establishment with an assortment of goods such as are usually found in a country store, consisting of dry goods, groceries, hardware, crockery, etc., etc. Like most persons who engage in a business which they do not understand, we were unsuccessful in the enterprise, and on the 17th of October, I bought out my uncle’s interest, as will be seen by the following advertisement, which I cut from a newspaper dated the 20th of that month:

⁶ The famous Litchfield Law School had at this time entered on its decline. It closed its doors in 1833. [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

DISSOLUTION. — The firm of TAYLOR & BARNUM is this day dissolved by mutual consent. ALANSON TAYLOR,
PHINEAS T. BARNUM.

 The business will be conducted in future by P. T. BARNUM, who will sell all kinds of dry goods, groceries, crockery, etc., etc., 25 per cent. cheaper than any of his neighbors.

Bethel, Oct. 17, 1831.

At about this period there was much excitement in the religious world — I mean in that portion of the country where I was residing, and indeed generally throughout New England. Protracted religious meetings were held in many of the churches, and by means of systematized effort, large numbers of people of all ages, but especially the young, were converted and received as members into the various churches where these meetings were held. So great was the alarm awakened in the minds of some of these converts, that they became victims of religious frenzy, and frequent cases of suicide and murder committed while in this state were chronicled throughout the country. I could mention many melancholy instances of the sort, including the murder of two children in New Canaan by their own father, but I forbear. I merely refer to the facts as one of the considerations moving me to the publication of a newspaper.

There was the additional consideration that certain over-zealous sectarian partisans had recently, and most injudiciously, recommended the formation of a "Christian party in politics." They advised that none except professors of religion should receive the benefit of the elective franchise, for any office of honor or profit in the civil government. One venerable clergyman stated that through the influence of Sabbath-schools alone, a complete triumph could be achieved over "the world's people" within ten, or at the farthest, twenty years.

I had never yet voted, having attained my majority on the 5th of July, 1831, but all my predilections were strongly in

favor of the Democratic party. My grandfather and his two sons were stanch Democrats, and I felt extremely anxious thus far to tread in their footsteps. Many persons (myself among the number) were honestly alarmed lest a great religious coalition should be formed in this country, which would carry out the desires of certain fanatics, as above shadowed forth.

I have long seen, and here confess, that our fears were exaggerated, though it is possible those fears had a part to perform in preventing the result referred to. It is true, many thousands of our citizens were influenced by the religious enthusiasm which was sweeping like a tornado through our land, and with the pages of history opened before us, setting forth what atrocities had been committed in the name of religion, when sectarianism was in power, persons were perhaps excusable for fearing that such scenes might possibly be re-enacted in this country. And yet I repeat, that after all, there was little reason to fear such a result. There were multitudes of sincere professors of religion, who cherished a deep reverence and love for those old Puritans, and others, who fled from persecution across the ocean, and it was an unreasonable apprehension that these would consent or be a party to any measure tending, in the remotest degree, to a union of Church and State. Our entire system of school education, too, had been, and still is, so strongly in favor of liberty, including of course political and religious equality, as to debar the success of any party that should attempt to ostracize such citizens as should happen to differ with them in their religious tenets.

However, being, as I confess, one of the number who had serious apprehensions on that subject, and being also a devoted Democrat at heart, I openly expressed my opinions, and doubtless thereby excited feelings of animosity with some individuals which otherwise would never have existed. I also wrote several communications for the Danbury weekly paper, setting forth my fears upon the subject, and animadverting in strong terms upon the evils resulting from undue religious excitement, and especially from countenancing the publicly announced policy of

certain fanatical clergymen in relation to public affairs. The publication of those communications was refused me by the proprietors of the Danbury paper. I became exceedingly indignant, and declared, as I honestly believed, that already had this sectarian influence become so powerful as to muzzle the press, and hence I felt it a double duty to arouse the public to a full apprehension of the true state of affairs.

I accordingly announced that I should purchase a press and types, and would within a few weeks commence the publication of a weekly paper which should oppose all combinations against the liberties of our country. On the 19th of October, 1831, I issued the first number of the "Herald of Freedom."

The boldness and vigor with which this paper was conducted, soon commanded a liberal circulation, not only in the vicinity of its publication, but large numbers of copies were sent into nearly every State in the Union.

Impelled by the vehemence of youth, and without the caution of experience or the dread of consequences, I repeatedly laid myself open to legal difficulty under the law of libel, and three times, during my three years as editor, I was prosecuted. One of these was a civil prosecution brought by a butcher in Danbury, a zealous politician, whom I accused as being a spy in the caucus of the Democratic party. On the first trial the jury could not agree; on the second I was fined several hundred dollars. Both the other prosecutions were brought in the name of the State. One of these was withdrawn without coming to trial. In the issue of the other, I was sentenced to pay a fine of one hundred dollars, and to be imprisoned for sixty days in the common jail.

The libel of the butcher will scarcely be thought a heinous offence, as judged by the general standard of political warfare; the suit entered but not tried need not be more particularly mentioned; but the most serious of the libels will justify a few lines in detail.

I was indicted for informing the readers of my paper, that a certain lay dignitary of a church in Bethel had "been guilty

HERALD OF FREEDOM AND GOSPEL WITNESS.

P. T. BARNUM.]

"For I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."—Jefferson.

[PUBLISHER.]

VOL. II.—NEW SERIES, No. 45.]

BETHEL, CONN. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1833.

[WHOLE No. 97.]

GOSPEL WITNESS.

"And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations."

The communications we shall steadily make through the columns of the Herald, will bear the initial A. and for the sentiments therein contained, we shall of course be in all cases responsible.

The public's obedient servant,

L. F. W. ANDREWS.

THE COMMENTARY.

We regret to learn that Bro. Hosea Ballou, 2d has declined undertaking the task which the New-York Convention, and we believe the Universalist denomination in general, desired to assign unto him, of writing out and publishing a popular commentary upon the New Testament. The reasons are not given to the public why he has declined according to the request of his friends, but we trust they are not of a character which render his determination immutable, as we know of no other who is so well qualified to perform the work to the acceptance of Universalists. At all events if any other should undertake the task, it is hoped he will avail himself of all the aid which Bro. B. can render, to make the work as perfect as possible.

A.

MINUTES OF ECCLESIASTICAL BODIES.

I have for some time thought of making a

the other, wherewith to stab her in her most vital part. Such men should be taught, and that right speedily, that 'Liberalism' is one thing, and 'Universalism' another, and that there is no faith so far removed from the darkness of unbelief as that which proclaims the boundless mercy of God, as revealed in the Scriptures of Truth, through the full and sufficient atonement of the man Christ Jesus. So immense is the distance between the doctrine of Universal Love and pardon, or infidelity, that there can never be any agreement between them, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? or what communion hath light with darkness? To the sincere believer, then, I would say with emphasis in the language of the Apostle Paul—'Wherefore, come out from among them and be ye separate [from all dishonesty and hypocrisy,] with the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you; and I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.' A.

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATION.

"It is good for a man that he should be weary, that he should be weary, that he should be weary, that he should be weary."—Matt. 10:24.

These words have given rise (says Calicut) to much discussion. Theophylact, with many ancient and modern Commentators, read

for his brought into existence millions of rational beings, and placed them on the brink of an endless hell, into which they are every moment in danger of falling. If this is the faith of Episcopalians, do they walk by it? His text was—'We walk by sight, and not by sight.' But if their faith lead them on 'slippery rocks, where they will fall below,' according to Dr. Watts, I can imagine how it enables them to stand as they do, fast to the possession of their faith, without wavering. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for; but can any rational being persevere in such misery, or possess a faith which works by love and purifies the heart, and yet stand on the brink of endless perdition, without feeling the bitterest anguish of mental agony which mortals can suffer? A no hope or belief which ends in unspeakable dread cannot be a true or a belief in the gospel of good news to the heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Some other expressions which the gentleman made were very objectionable. He said 'God's patience would be exhausted.' If this be true, it brings down a veil with finite mortals, for their patience is exhausted when they cannot carry their faith into effect. But to say this of Him who is all power in heaven and earth, is contrary to the express declaration of Holy Writ.

Reported for the Convention and Enquirer.
TRIAL OF REV. HEPHAIAH K. AVERY.
SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT OF THE
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, before the Hon Chief Justice SAMUEL EDDY, and Judges CHARLES BRAYTON and JOSEPH DUTCHER.
(Continued.)

39. John W. Dorr.—I reside about three-fourths of a mile from where the camp meeting was held in Thompson. Mr. Avery came to my house between sundown and dark on Tuesday evening; I was at my father's when he arrived there, and went with him to my house: he did not go on the camp ground that night; I put Mr. Avery's horse and chaise in my barn: they were not afterwards found by him until he started for home. Mr. Avery first went on the camp ground between six and seven Wednesday morning; I went to the ground a number of times on Wednesday; I don't know that I saw Mr. Avery on the ground that day. He returned to my house that evening between 9 and 10. Peter Sabins was with him, but I cannot say whether they came in together or not. I do not know that he left the house after he came in. Sabins slept with him. He went on the ground soon after breakfast on Thursday, between 6 and 7; I am not positive, but think Mr. Sabins went with him. He returned home on Thursday with Mr. Candall not far from 9 o'clock. Mr. Candall was with him that night; they left my house in Mr. Avery's chaise next morning to return home and did not come back.

Candall was at my father's barn

Lowell for lewdness. He told me under what circumstances he saw her on Thursday morning, and that when she cast her eye on him she dropped as though she had been shot; I don't recollect any further conversation about her. I inferred from his expression that she meant to conceal herself from his view. On Friday morning, soon after breakfast, I saw him in his chaise; don't recollect that any body was with him; he was then at Mr. Elliott's house. I conversed with him 15 or 20 minutes. I think he drove off and left me; he bid me good morning; I do not recollect that any person joined him.

Cross-examination.—I think the service on Thursday evening began at the usual hour, at half past seven. Mr. Avery came into the tent after I was there. I do not know where the Mr. Avery tent was; there was such a tent; I have no recollection of seeing him with any one, save that I did not know; I do not know Miss Cornell. My impression is, but I am not positive enough to swear to it, that I saw Mr. Avery on the ground on Thursday evening when the horn sounded. When I spoke to Mr. Avery about bad characters, I referred to females. I do not know that measures were taken to remove Miss Cornell from the ground. I received my information relative to bad characters being on the ground from the Rev. Mr. Merrill. I have known Mr. Avery for five years, I visited him several times to attend the camp meeting. Here the witness described the various places where Mr. Avery had been stationed as preacher; I examined on the ground every spot from the first night until the meeting closed.

Courtesy of "Danbury Evening News."

PART OF THE FIRST PAGE OF BARNUM'S "HERALD OF FREEDOM AND GOSPEL WITNESS" FOR AUGUST 21, 1833. From a photograph, considerably reduced.

of taking usury of an orphan boy." The general fact was accompanied by severe editorial commentary, and criminal prosecution was instituted against me.

The case came to trial, and several witnesses, including the party accused, proved substantially the truth of my statement. But, alas! "the greater the truth the greater the libel"; and besides, I had employed the term *usury*. Had I termed the deed an extortion, or note-shaving, or grinding the face of the poor orphan boy, the verdict might have been different — but I had called the act "usury." The judge charged the jury as though he were the attorney for the prosecution, and was believed to experience personal satisfaction in pronouncing the sentence which I have already mentioned.

I here withhold the names of the parties, because the insertion of them could accomplish no good purpose. The party whom I charged with a serious offence, naturally felt deeply aggrieved, though he has recently declared that the prosecution was instituted without his suggestion or concurrence. At the time, I spoke in no gentle terms in relation to him, and since that date have frequently repeated those hard words. Nevertheless the whole affair was, and has always been, a source of merriment to me. The annoyance I experienced was measurably merited by the severity of my strictures on a deed which aroused my indignation, but which might possibly have been palliated by the circumstances; and now that I am fastening the general facts in these pages, I desire to wipe out all unpleasant recollections on the subject. The judge exemplified only human weakness in permitting my course as an editor to embitter his feelings as an earnest sectarian; but he has gone to that "better country" in which animosities are not cherished, and I am sure they exist not in my own breast in connection with his memory.⁷

⁷ Now it can be told, for the enlightenment of the antiquarian or the curious, that the plaintiff was one Seth Seelye and the judge "that lump of superstition David Daggett" — to use the phrase of Barnum himself in a letter written from jail on October 7, 1832, to Gideon Welles of Hartford. [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

I was very comfortably provided for in the common jail of Danbury. I had my room papered and carpeted previously to taking possession as a tenant for sixty days; I lived well; was even oppressed by the almost constant visits of cordial friends; edited my paper as usual, and received several hundred additional subscribers to my list, during the term of my imprisonment.⁸

When that term was ended, the event was celebrated by a large concourse of people, from all the country round. It was celebrated in the court-room in which I had been convicted for libel. An admirable ode, written for the occasion, was sung, and an eloquent oration on the Freedom of the Press was delivered by the Rev. T. Fiske. Several hundred gentlemen afterwards partook of a sumptuous dinner, and the toasts and speeches, while not neglecting the subjects usual in political and social festivals, related prominently to the circumstances which had called the people together.

Then came the most imposing part of the ceremonial. It was reported and described as follows in my paper of December 12, 1832:

P. T. BARNUM and the band of music took their seats in a coach drawn by six horses, which had been prepared for the occasion. The coach was preceded by forty horsemen, and a marshal, bearing the national standard. Immediately in the rear of the coach was the carriage of the Orator and the President of the day, followed by the Committee of Arrangements and sixty carriages of citizens, which joined in escorting the editor to his home in Bethel.

When the procession commenced its march amidst the roar of cannon, three cheers were given by several hundred citizens who did not join in the procession. The band of music continued to play a variety of national airs until their arrival in Bethel (a distance of three miles), when they struck up the beautiful and appropriate tune of "Home,

⁸ Barnum had referred, in his letter to Welles, to "these gloomy walls," and had asked Welles to tell friends "that I am suffering for daring to tell the truth but that the kindness of friends keeps my spirits buoyed up in this day of trial." [Ed.]



EDITOR BARNUM QUILTS JAIL WITH A FLOURISH
From the 1869 "Struggles and Triumphs."

BAD DEBTS

Sweet Home! " After giving three hearty cheers, the procession returned to Danbury. The utmost harmony and unanimity of feeling prevailed throughout the day, and we are happy to add that no accident occurred to mar the festivities of the occasion.

No one will be surprised that I should have regarded such a return to my home and family as a triumphal march. It was in effect a vindication, because an approval of my course, and a condemnation both of the "common law of libel," and of all who had been engaged in my prosecution.

My editorial career was one of constant contest, and might furnish many interesting incidents for these pages, but I pass to another section of my history.

The mercantile business, which I continued while publishing the "Herald," did not thrive, for various reasons. I was not in my natural sphere. I wanted to do business faster than ordinary mercantile transactions would admit; hence I bought largely, and in order to sell largely, was compelled to give extensive credits — and soon had an accumulation of bad debts. My old ledger at this day has hundreds of accounts upon it which are balanced thus: "By death, to balance," — "By running away, in full," — "By cheating me out of my dues, to balance," — "By failing, in full," — "By swearing he would not pay me, in full"; and one small account of a few dollars against a rich man of Danbury, having stood so long that I supposed the wealthy debtor had forgotten it, and I felt loth to remind him of his indebtedness, stands balanced by being "Too rich to be dunned."

I should have said that in the summer of 1831, I took Horace Fairchild into co-partnership, but in January, 1833, I sold out all my interest in the store to a Mr. Toucey, brother of Senator Toucey, who, with Horace Fairchild, continued the business under the name of "Fairchild & Co."

No. 160 of the "Herald of Freedom" was published in Danbury, November 5, 1834, after which it was removed to

Norwalk, Ct., and there published for me by my brother-in-law, John W. Amerman, until, in the course of the year ensuing, it was sold to Mr. George Taylor.⁹

⁹ No complete file of this paper is known to exist, and odd copies are scarce. It was a four-page blanket sheet of excellent typography. At one time (as the issue for August 21, 1833, shows), it was dated from Bethel and its full title was "Herald of Freedom and Gospel Witness." It was extremely caustic toward the evangelical clergy (except Universalists), as well as toward "lay dignitaries" — though its ire was tempered by humor; its politics were those of Jacksonian Democracy; and it carried considerable advertising, local and other. Even before the "Herald's" removal to Norwalk, Barnum's name had disappeared from the heading and Amerman was the announced publisher. [Ed.]

CHAPTER VII

STRUGGLING—JOICE HETH—VIVALLA

Removal to New York—Tempting Advertisements—Seeking Employment—Disappointment—Darrow and the Shirt—Missed a Figure—Joice Heth—My First Interview—Bill of Sale—I Purchase Joice—The Contract—Exhibition at Niblo's—Management—Notices of the Press—Lawrie Todd—Ancient Hymns—Joice in Boston—Maelzel—Important Discovery—A Ludicrous Incident—Signor Vivalla—My Second Show—Washington City—Scene in the Senate—Anne Royall—A Tempest of Wrath—The "Paul Pry"—Proposed Speculation—Pawning my Watch—The Challenge—A Crotchet—Private Interview—Great Excitement—Trial of Skill—The Moral—Death of Joice—Post-Mortem Examination—A Statement—Lyman's Hoax—Newspaper Controversy—False History—My Object.

IN the winter of 1834-35, I removed my family to New York, having hired a house in Hudson street. Strictly speaking, I entered that great city to "seek my fortune." Lotteries in the State of Connecticut had been prohibited by law; I had lost large amounts of money by my private customers, some of whom had gone beyond their means in purchasing tickets, while others had put their property out of their hands, and thus defrauded me of considerable sums. I was also a large loser by the mercantile business, and must confess, in addition, that the old proverb "Easy come, easy go" was too true in my case. I had learned that I could make money rapidly and in large sums, whenever I set about it with a will, and I did not hesitate to expend it in various extravagances as freely as I gained it. I acquired it so readily, that I did not realize the worth of it, and I entertained no anxiety whatever about laying it up. To be sure, I thought that at some future time I should begin to accumulate by saving, but I cared not for the present, and hence I scattered my means with an open and unsparing hand.

When I removed to New York, I had no pecuniary resources except such as were derived from old debts left in the hands of an agent in Bethel for collection.

I had hoped to find an opening with some mercantile firm in New York, where for my services I could receive a portion of the profits, for I had a disposition which ever revolted at laboring for a fixed salary. I wanted an opportunity where my faculties and energies could have full play, and where the amount of profits should depend entirely upon the amount of tact, perseverance, and energy which I contributed to the business. But I could not find the situation I coveted. My resources began to fail me, and, my family being in ill-health, I found it difficult to maintain them. In order to do so, I secured the situation of "drummer" to several stores, including the cap and stock store of Mr. Chapman in Chatham street, the proprietors of which allowed me a small commission on all sales which they made to customers whom I introduced.

This of course was only a temporary arrangement, and, like Micawber, I was continually on the look-out for something better to "turn up." Every morning at sunrise my eyes were running over the columns of "Wants" in the New York "Sun," hoping to hit upon something that would suit me. Many was the wild-goose chase which I had in pursuit of a situation so beautifully and temptingly set forth among those "wants." Fortunes equalling that of Cræsus, and as plenty as blackberries, were dangling from many an advertisement which mysteriously invited the reader to apply at Room No. 16, in the fifth story of a house in some retired and uninviting locality; but when I had wended my way up flights of dark, rickety, greasy stairs, and through sombre, narrow passages, I would find that my fortune depended firstly upon my advancing a certain sum of money, from three dollars to five hundred as the case might be; and secondly, upon my success in peddling a newly discovered patent life-pill, an ingenious mouse-trap, or something of the sort.

I remember that, on one occasion, an advertisement was

headed, "IMMENSE SPECULATION on a small capital!—\$10,000 easily made in one year! Apply to Professor —, at Scudder's American Museum."

I had long fancied that I could succeed if I could only get hold of a public exhibition, and I hastened with all dispatch to call on the kind Professor who held forth such flattering promises at the Museum. Being ushered upon the stage of the lecture-room in the third story, I was grieved to find a dozen applicants already ahead of me. I instantly sought out the Professor, and calling him aside, took a few moments to recover myself, for I was nearly out of breath from running so fast up stairs, and then I asked him whether he had yet disposed of his speculation.

"Not positively, but several customers are ready to close with me immediately," was the Professor's reply.

"I beg of you to give me a chance; you will find me just the man you want," I replied with great earnestness.

"Well, as you are so anxious, and seem to be a young man of energy, I will give you the first chance," replied the kind Professor.

I felt exceedingly grateful, and asked him the nature of his enterprise.

"I am the proprietor of the great Hydro-oxygen Microscope," said he. "It is the most extraordinary instrument now extant. Its public exhibition through the country would in a very short period secure to its owner an independence. My health is feeble, and I will sell for only two thousand dollars; one thousand cash — the balance in sixty and ninety days, on good security."

My golden visions vanished, and I abruptly informed the Professor that I declined becoming a purchaser of his instrument.

On another occasion an advertisement announced that "twenty dollars per day could be earned without any capital." This struck me as a capital chance, and I started forthwith for the place indicated for applicants.

I found a little dark-looking old woman, surrounded by at least twenty anxious listeners. Her tongue was running at a most rapid rate. She informed her auditors that she was about to publish a pamphlet called the *Tenant's Guide*, setting forth a full description of all the houses that were to let in the city of New York. "Now," said she, "here is a quantity of small blank books and lead pencils. Each of you is to take one of these books and pencils; leave me a shilling as a guaranty that you will return them; then tell me what streets you will take, so as not to cross each other's track. You are to watch every house closely. The moment you see a bill up, indicating that the house is 'To Let,' ring the bell, pull out your book and pencil, and when a person comes to the door, inquire the price of rent, the number of rooms, and all the various accommodations — mark them all down, and hasten on to the next house which has a bill up, where you must repeat the operation. I hope, by having a large and effective corps of agents, to have the city finished in ten days, and to print my book in ten days more. The proceeds of my pamphlet, after paying the expenses of printing, publishing, advertising, etc., shall be divided in this manner: One half to me, the inventor of this great desideratum, and the other half to be fairly divided among you, my agents, according to the number of 'houses to let' which you return to me. I have no doubt that thousands of dollars will be realized by this speculation, and you will perceive that he who works the hardest will be the best paid. I always like to reward persons according to their labors. In other words, I delight in helping people who will try to help themselves. I would mention, however, that the number of houses obtained will not be the only criterion of reward, as I shall make favorable allowance to such as write plainly and who give me the best detail of particulars in regard to each house."

Before the old lady had finished her speech the larger portion of her audience had departed, but new applicants continued to arrive, and she recommenced her address so soon as she had finished it.

It will be believed that I was not tempted by the grand speculation, but being always a student of human nature, I could not help remaining until she had repeated her speech several times, merely to witness the effect which it had upon her hearers. None ventured to take a book while I was there, and the supply of customers being about equal to its falling off, there were constantly two moving rows of applicants, one row passing down stairs and the other passing up.

One morning I found in the "Sun" an advertisement for a barkeeper, application to be made to William Niblo. I proceeded at once to Niblo's Garden,¹ and there, for the first time in my life, saw its gentlemanly and justly-popular proprietor. Upon stating my business, Mr. Niblo informed me that he wished to employ a well-behaved and reliable man, who was competent to fill the vacant situation, who could produce the highest testimonials of his integrity, and who would bind himself to remain in the situation for three years. This last condition, of course, clashed with my arrangements, as I sought the situation only as a means of temporary relief, being determined at an early day, if possible, to secure a place such as I have before described.

All my running at the beck of advertisers finally benefited me nothing. I obtained no situation during the entire winter.

Early in the spring I received several hundred dollars from my agent in Bethel, and finding no other business to suit me, I opened a small private boarding-house at No. 52 Frankfort street, on the 1st May, 1835. I intended this mostly for transient boarders, consisting of my acquaintances in Connecticut who had occasion to visit New York. We soon had a good share of custom, but not having sufficient employment for my time I purchased an interest in a grocery store, No. 156 South street, in company with Mr. John Moody.

During this year, I occasionally visited Bridgeport, and seldom failed to see a noted joker, named Darrow, at the hotel,

¹ This was on the east side of Broadway, between Prince and Houston streets. See pp. 108-109. [Ed.]

in the evening. He spared neither friend nor foe in his tricks. He was generally the life of the bar-room, and if a stranger made his appearance Darrow would try to win a treat for the company, by some bet which he would induce him to make. On one occasion he made several ineffectual efforts to catch me with some of his tricks. At last Darrow, who always stuttered, made another trial. Coming up in front of me, and looking me square in the eyes, he said, "Come, Barnum, I'll make you another p-p-pr-proposition. I'll bet you hain't got a whole shirt on your back." The catch in this proposition consists in the fact that under ordinary circumstances only *one half* of that useful garment is upon the back. Anticipating this proposition however — in fact having induced a Mr. Hough to put Darrow up to the trick — I had taken a shirt from my valise, and nicely folding it, placed it exactly on my back, fastening it there by passing my suspenders over it.

The bar-room was crowded with customers, who, with the exception of Hough, were not in the secret. They supposed that if I made the bet I should be caught. Wishing to play off a little, in order to make Darrow the more sharp for betting, I replied:

"That is a foolish bet to make. I am sure my shirt is whole because it is nearly new, but I don't like to bet on such a subject."

"A good reason why," said Darrow, in high glee; "it's ragged. Come, I'll bet you a treat for the whole company you hain't got a whole shirt on your b-b-b-back!"

"I'll bet my shirt is cleaner than yours," I replied.

"That's nothing to do w-w-with the case; it's ragged, and y-y-you know it."

"I know it is not," I replied with pretended anger, which caused the crowd to laugh heartily.

"You poor ragged f-f-fellow, come down here from D-D-Danbury, I'm sorry for you," said Darrow tantalizingly.

"You would not pay if you lost," I remarked.

"Here's f-f-five dollars I'll put in Captain Hinman's [the

landlord's] hands. Now b-b-bet if you dare, you ragged c-c-creature you!"

I put up five dollars in Captain Hinman's hands, and told him to treat the company from it if I lost the bet.

"Remember," said Darrow, "I b-b-bet you hain't got a whole shirt on your b-b-back!"

"All right," said I, taking off my coat and commencing to unbutton my vest. The whole company, feeling sure that I was caught, began to laugh heartily. Old Darrow fairly danced with delight, and as I laid my coat on a chair he came running up in front of me, and slapping his hands together exclaimed:

"You needn't t-t-take off any more c-c-c-clothes, for if it ain't all on your b-b-back, you've lost it."

"If it is, I suppose you have!" I replied, pulling the whole shirt from off my back!

Such a shriek of laughter as burst forth from the crowd I scarcely ever heard, and certainly such a blank countenance as old Darrow exhibited it would be hard to conceive. Seeing that he was most incontinently "done for," and perceiving that his neighbor Hough had helped to do it, he ran up to him in great anger, and shaking his fist in his face exclaimed:

"H-H-Hough, you infernal r-r-rascal, to go against your own n-n-neighbor in favor of a D-D-Danbury man. I'll pay you for that some time, you see if I d-d-don't."

All hands went up to the bar and drank with a hearty goodwill, for it was seldom that Darrow got taken in, and he was such an inveterate joker they liked to see him paid in his own coin. Never till the day of his death did he hear the last of the "whole shirt."

By this time it was clear to my mind that my proper position in this busy world was not yet reached. I had displayed the faculty of getting money, as well as getting rid of it; but the business for which I was destined, and, I believe, made, had not yet come to me; or rather, I had not found that I was to cater for that insatiate want of human nature — the love of

amusement; that I was to make a sensation on two continents; and that fame and fortune awaited me so soon as I should appear before the public in the character of a showman. These things I had not foreseen. I did not seek the position or the character. The business finally came in my way; I fell into the occupation, and far beyond any of my predecessors on this continent, I have succeeded.

The show business has all phases and grades of dignity, from the exhibition of a monkey to the exposition of that highest art in music or the drama which entrances empires and secures for the gifted artist a world-wide fame which princes well might envy. Such art is merchantable, and so with the whole range of amusements, from the highest to the lowest. The old word "trade," as it applies to buying cheap and selling at a profit, is as manifest here as it is in the dealings at a street-corner stand or in Stewart's store covering a whole square. This is a trading world, and men, women, and children, who cannot live on gravity alone, need something to satisfy their gayer, lighter moods and hours, and he who ministers to this want is in a business established by the Author of our nature. If he worthily fulfils his mission, and amuses without corrupting, he need never feel that he has lived in vain.

Whether I may claim a pre-eminence of grandeur in my career as a dispenser of entertainment for mankind, I may not say. I have sometimes been weak enough to think so, but let others judge; and whether I may assume that on the whole, I have sought to make amusement harmless, and have succeeded to a very great degree in eliminating from public entertainments certain corruptions which have made so many theatrical "sensations" positively shameful, may safely be left, I think, to the thousands upon thousands who have known me and the character of my amusement so long and so well.

But I shall by no means claim entire faultlessness in my history as a showman. I confess that I have not always been strong enough to rise out of the exceptional ways which charac-

terize the art of amusing — not more, however, than any other art or trade. When, in beginning business under my own name in Bethel, in 1831, I advertised that I would sell goods “25 per cent. cheaper” than any of my neighbors,² I was guilty of a trick of trade, but so common a trick, that very few who saw my promise were struck with a sense of any particular enormity therein, while, doubtless, a good many who claim to be specially exemplary thought they were reading one of their own advertisements. And in the show business I was never guilty of a greater sin than this against truthfulness and fair dealing.

The least deserving of all my efforts in the show line was the one which introduced me to the business; a scheme in no sense of my own devising; one which had been some time before the public and which had so many vouchers for its genuineness that at the time of taking possession of it I honestly believed it to be genuine; something, too, which, as I have said, I did not seek, but which by accident came in my way and seemed almost to compel my agency — such was the “Joice Heth” exhibition which first brought me forward as a showman.

In the summer of 1835, Mr. Coley Bartram, of Reading,³ Connecticut, informed me that he had owned an interest in a remarkable negro woman whom he believed to be one hundred and sixty-one years old, and whom he also believed to have been the nurse of General Washington. He then showed me a copy of the following advertisement in the “*Pennsylvania Inquirer*” of July 15, 1835:

CURIOSITY. — The citizens of Philadelphia and its vicinity have an opportunity of witnessing at the MASONIC HALL, one of the greatest natural curiosities ever witnessed, viz., JOICE HETH, a negress aged 161 years, who formerly belonged to the father of Gen. Washington.

² See p. 88. [Ed.]

³ This is the original and correct form of the name that has since become “Redding.” [Ed.]

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She has been a member of the Baptist Church one hundred and sixteen years, and can rehearse many hymns, and sing them according to former custom. She was born near the old Potomac River in Virginia, and has for ninety or one hundred years lived in Paris, Kentucky, with the Bowling family.

All who have seen this extraordinary woman are satisfied of the truth of the account of her age. The evidence of the Bowling family, which is respectable, is strong, but the original bill of sale of Augustine Washington, in his own handwriting, and other evidence which the proprietor has in his possession, will satisfy even the most incredulous.

A lady will attend at the hall during the afternoon and evening for the accommodation of those ladies who may call.

Mr. Bartram further stated that he had sold out his interest to his partner, R. W. Lindsay, of Jefferson County, Kentucky, who was then exhibiting Joice Heth in Philadelphia, but was anxious to sell out and go home — the alleged reason being that he had very little tact as a showman. As the New York papers had also contained some account of Joice Heth, I went on to Philadelphia to see Mr. Lindsay and his exhibition.

I was favorably struck with the appearance of the old woman. So far as outward indications were concerned, she might almost as well have been called a thousand years old as any other age. She was lying upon a high lounge in the middle of the room; her lower extremities were drawn up, with her knees elevated some two feet above the top of the lounge. She was apparently in good health and spirits, but former disease or old age, or perhaps both combined, had rendered her unable to change her position; in fact, although she could move one of her arms at will, her lower limbs were fixed in their position, and could not be straightened. She was totally blind, and her eyes were so deeply sunken in their sockets that the eyeballs seemed to have disappeared altogether. She had no teeth, but possessed a head of thick, bushy gray hair. Her left arm lay across her breast, and she had no power to remove it. The

fingers of her left hand were drawn down so as nearly to close it, and remained fixed and immovable. The nails upon that hand were about four inches in length, and extended above her wrist. The nails upon her large toes also had grown to the thickness of nearly a quarter of an inch.

She was very sociable, and would talk almost incessantly so long as visitors would converse with her. She sang a variety of ancient hymns, and was very garrulous when speaking of her protégé "dear little George," as she termed the great father of our country. She declared that she was present at his birth, that she was formerly the slave of Augustine Washington, the father of George, and that she was the first person who put clothes upon him. "In fact," said Joice, and it was a favorite expression of hers, "I raised him." She related many interesting anecdotes of her "dear little George," and this, mixed with her conversations upon religious subjects, for she claimed to be a member of the Baptist Church, rendered her exhibition an extremely interesting one.

I asked Mr. Lindsay for the proofs of her extraordinary age, and he exhibited what purported to be a bill of sale from Augustine Washington, of the county of Westmoreland, Virginia, to Elizabeth Atwood, of "one negro woman, named Joice Heth, aged fifty-four years, for and in consideration of the sum of thirty-three pounds lawful money of Virginia." The document bore the date "fifth day of February, one thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven," and was "sealed and delivered in presence of Richard Buckner and William Washington."

The story told by Lindsay and "Aunt Joice" was, that Mrs. Elizabeth Atwood was a sister-in-law of Augustine Washington,⁴ that the husband of Joice was a slave of Mrs. Atwood, and for that reason the above sale was made. As Mrs. Atwood was a near neighbor of Mr. Washington, Aunt Joice was present at the birth of "little George," and she having long been

⁴ "Struggles and Triumphs" says "a half-sister and neighbor of Mr. Washington." Somewhat elusive, is Mrs. Atwood. [Ed.]

the old family nurse, was the first person called upon to clothe the new-born infant.

The story seemed plausible, and the "bill of sale" had every appearance of antiquity. It was exhibited in a glass frame, was very sallow in appearance, and seemed to have been folded for such a great length of time that the folds were worn nearly through, and in some parts entirely so.

I inquired why the existence of such an extraordinary old woman had not been discovered and made known long ago. The reply was that she had been lying in an out-house of John S. Bowling of Kentucky for many years, that no one knew or seemed to care how old she was, that she had been brought thither from Virginia a long time ago, and that the fact of her extreme age had been but recently brought to light by the discovery of this old bill of sale in the Record office in Virginia, by the son of Mr. Bowling, who, while looking over the ancient papers in that office, happened to notice the paper endorsed "Joice Heth," that his curiosity was excited, and from inquiries made in that neighborhood he was convinced that the document applied to his father's old slave then living, and who was therefore really one hundred and sixty-one years of age; that he thereupon took the paper home, and became confirmed in regard to the identity of Joice with the slave described in that paper.

This whole account appeared to me satisfactory, and I inquired the price of the negress. Three thousand dollars was the sum named, but before leaving Philadelphia I received from Mr. Lindsay a writing, stipulating that I should have the right at any time within ten days to become her owner upon paying to him the sum of one thousand dollars.

With this paper I started for New York, determined if possible to purchase Joice Heth. I did not possess more than five hundred dollars in cash, but my glowing representations to a friend, of the golden harvest which I was sure the exhibition must produce, induced him to loan me the other five hundred dollars, and after a few days, during which time I sold my in-

“ BY THESE PRESENTS ”

terest in the grocery store to my partner, Moody, I returned to Philadelphia with the money, and became the proprietor of the negress, as appears by the following document :

WHEREAS, by articles of agreement dated June 10th, A. D. 1835, John S. Bowling, the owner of an African woman called JOICE HETH, and R. W. Lindsay, of Jefferson County, Commonwealth of Kentucky, covenanted and agreed for the term of twelve months to participate equally in the gains and losses in exhibiting the African woman, Joice Heth, in and amongst the cities of the United States: And whereas, R. W. Lindsay says, that John S. Bowling transferred all his right, title, interest, and claim arising out of said agreement to Coley Bartram, and whereas, the said Coley Bartram, by a writing dated at Philadelphia, July 24th, A. D. 1835, did transfer to R. W. Lindsay all his interest in the colored woman, Joice Heth, aged 161 years, sold to him by John S. Bowling, of Kentucky, dated June 15, A. D. 1835: Now know all men by these presents, that I, the said R. W. Lindsay, for and in consideration of the sum of one thousand dollars to me in hand paid by PHINEAS T. BARNUM, at or before the sealing of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have bargained, sold, transferred, and delivered, and by these presents do bargain, sell, transfer, and deliver unto the said Phineas T. Barnum, his executors, administrators, or assigns, the possession of the person of the African woman, JOICE HETH, and the sole right of exhibiting her during the unexpired term of the twelve months mentioned in the agreement dated June 10th, A. D. 1835, in and amongst the cities of the United States, and all my right, title, interest, or claim whatsoever, to the possession of the said Joice Heth, and to the right of exhibiting her as aforesaid. And I do hereby for myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators, covenant, promise, and agree to and with the said Phineas T. Barnum, his heirs and assigns, by these presents, that I, the said R. W. Lindsay, and my heirs, have and do enjoy the just and legal possession of the said Joice Heth, and the sole right of exhibiting her in and amongst the cities of the United States during the unexpired time of the twelve months commencing June 10th, A. D. 1835. And I do further covenant, promise, and agree, that the possession of Joice Heth, and the right of exhibiting

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her as aforesaid, and all my title and interest in Joice Heth, hereby transferred and delivered unto the said Phineas T. Barnum, his heirs and assigns, against me, R. W. Lindsay, and my heirs, and against Coley Bartram, and against John S. Bowling and his heirs, and against all and every other person and persons whatsoever, lawfully claiming or to claim by, from, or under him, them, or any of them, shall and will warrant and for ever defend by these presents.

Provided, always, such claims shall be made previous to the tenth day of June, A. D. 1836. I hold myself clear of all covenants and agreements for the possession of the person of Joice Heth, or the right of exhibiting her after the tenth day of June, A. D. 1836.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this sixth day of August, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and thirty-five.

Sealed and delivered in presence of

SAML. H. TRAQUAIR,

W. DELANY.

} R. W. LINDSAY. 

Received, August 6, 1835, from Phineas T. Barnum, one thousand dollars, being the full consideration of the within conveyance, and of the covenants and agreements contained therein. (Signed)

R. W. LINDSAY.

I engaged Lindsay to continue the exhibition in Philadelphia for a week, in order to allow me time to make the necessary arrangements for her reception in New York.

I applied to Mr. William Niblo, who, I believe, had seen the old negress in Philadelphia. He did not recognize me as the person who a few months previously had applied to him for the situation of barkeeper. We soon made a bargain for the exhibition of Aunt Joice in one of the large apartments in his dwelling-house in the vicinity of his saloon, which was at that time a large, open, and airy establishment where musical and light entertainments were given, the guests during the intermission, as well as at other times, being supplied with ice-creams

and other refreshments, in little alcove-boxes fitted up with tables, and running nearly all the distance around his garden.

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. .

The terms of my engagement with Mr. Niblo were these: He was to furnish the room and lights, pay the expense of printing, advertising, and a ticket-seller, and retain therefor one half of the gross receipts. The result proved an average of about \$1500 per week.

I engaged as an assistant in exhibiting "Aunt Joice" Mr. Levi Lyman. He was a lawyer by profession, and had been practising in Penn Yan, N. Y. He was a shrewd, sociable, and somewhat indolent Yankee; possessed a good knowledge of human nature; was polite, agreeable, could converse on most subjects, and was admirably calculated to fill the position for which I engaged him.

Of course, in carrying out my new vocation of showman, I spared no reasonable efforts to make it successful. I was aware of the great power of the public press, and I used it to the extent of my ability. Lyman wrote a brief memoir of Joice, and putting it into a pamphlet form, illustrated with her portrait, sold it to visitors on his own account, at six cents per copy.

I had the same portrait printed on innumerable small bills, and also flooded the city with "posters" setting forth the peculiar attractions which "the nurse of Washington" presented. Here are a few specimens of advertisements and notices of that day:

NIBLO'S GARDEN. — The greatest curiosity in the world, and the most interesting, particularly to Americans, is now exhibiting at the Saloon fronting on Broadway, in the building recently erected for the dioramic view, **JOICE HETH**, nurse to Gen. George Washington (the father of our country), who has arrived at the astonishing age of 161 years, as authentic documents will prove, and in full possession of her mental faculties. She is cheerful and healthy, although she weighs but

forty-nine pounds. She relates many anecdotes of her young master; she speaks also of the red-coats during the Revolutionary War, but does not appear to hold them in high estimation.

She has been visited by crowds of ladies and gentlemen, among whom were many clergymen and physicians, who have pronounced her the most ancient specimen of mortality the oldest of them has ever seen or heard of, and consider her a very great curiosity.

She has been a member of the Baptist Church for upwards of one hundred years, and seems to take great satisfaction in the conversation of ministers who visit her. She frequently sings and repeats parts of hymns and psalms.

Another advertisement contained a still closer appeal to both patriotism and curiosity:

JOICE HETH is unquestionably the most astonishing and interesting curiosity in the world. She was the slave of Augustine Washington (the father of George Washington), and was the first person *who put clothes on the unconscious infant* who was destined in after days to lead our heroic fathers to glory, to victory, and to freedom. To use her own language when speaking of her young master, George Washington, "she raised him."

Editorial notices were abundant in many papers of the day, news, literary, political, and religious — of which the following may serve as samples:

JOICE HETH. — The arrival at Niblo's Garden of this renowned relic of the olden time has created quite a sensation among the lovers of the curious and the marvellous; and a greater object of marvel and curiosity has never presented itself for their gratification. From the length of her limbs and size of her bones, it is probable she was a large, stout woman in her day, but now she comes up exactly to one's idea of an animated mummy. Her weight is said to be less than fifty pounds; her feet have shrunk to mere skin and bone, and her long, attenuated fingers more resemble the claws of a bird of prey than human appendages. Notwithstanding her burden of years and infirmities, she

THE "OLD ONE" ARRIVES

is lively, and seems to retain all her senses wonderfully. Her hearing is almost as acute as that of any person of middle age. — *New York Sun*.

The "old one" has arrived, and crowds of ladies and gentlemen have visited her at Niblo's. She is lively, and answers every question cheerfully. From the bill of sale of this old lady from General Washington's father, we can have no doubt that she is 160 years of age. Her appearance is very much like an Egyptian mummy just escaped from its sarcophagus. — *New York Evening Star*.

We venture to state, that since the flood, a like circumstance has not been witnessed equal to one which is about to happen this week. Ancient or modern times furnish no parallel to the great age of this woman. Methuselah was 969 years old when he died, but nothing is said of the age of his wife. Adam attained nearly the age of his antiquated descendant. It is not unlikely that the sex in the olden time were like the daughters at the present day — unwilling to tell their age. Joice Heth is an exception; she comes out boldly, and says she is rising 160. — *New York Daily Advertiser*.

This old creature is said to be 161 years of age, and we see no reason to doubt it. Nobody indeed would dispute it if she claimed to be five centuries, for she and the Egyptian mummy at the American Museum appear to be about of an age. — *New York Courier and Enquirer*.

The dear old lady, after carrying on a desperate flirtation with Death, has finally jilted him. In the future editions, we shall expect to see her represented as the impersonation of Time in the Primer, old Time having given her a season ticket for life. The Wandering Jew and herself are the only two people we wot of that have been put on the free-list of this world for the season of eternity. — *New York Spirit of the Times*.

Joice was an inveterate smoker, and Grant Thorburn (better known as Lawrie Todd) gave some occasion of triumph to many editors by publishing an article in the "Evening Star," from which the following is an extract:

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I have been to see Joice Heth to-day. I find that with all her other rare qualities, she is a *profound smoker*. Her attendants are obliged to abridge this luxury, else the pipe would never be out of her mouth. I asked her how long she had used the pipe, and she answered, "One hundred and twenty years!" So, if smoking be a poison, it is, in her case at least, a very slow poison.

Our exhibition usually opened with a statement of the manner in which the age of Joice Heth was discovered, as well as the account of her antecedents in Virginia, and a reading of the bill of sale. We would then question her in relation to the birth and youth of General Washington, and she always gave satisfactory answers in every particular. Individuals among the audience would also frequently ask her questions, and put her to the severest cross-examinations, without ever finding her to deviate from what had every evidence of being a plain unvarnished statement of facts.

Joice was very fond of church-music, to which she would beat time by waving her long withered arm. On one occasion in New York an aged Baptist minister stood by her side as she was singing one of her favorite hymns, and he joined her, and lined each verse. She was much pleased by this circumstance, and sang with renewed animation. After the hymn was finished, the clergyman lined off the verse of another hymn, and Joice immediately remarking, "I know that hymn," joined him in singing it. He lined in this manner several hymns which were entirely new to me, and in each case Joice knew them, and in one or two instances refreshed his memory when he found himself at a loss to recall the exact language of the verses. Joice loved to converse upon religious subjects, and frequently insisted on the attendance of clergymen for that purpose.

The question naturally arises, if Joice Heth was an impostor, *who* taught her these things? and how happened it that she was so familiar, not only with ancient psalmody, but also with the minute details of the Washington family? To all this, I unhesitatingly answer, *I do not know*. I taught her none of

these things. She was perfectly familiar with them all before I ever saw her, and she taught me many facts in relation to the Washington family with which I was not before acquainted.

From Providence, where the exhibition was highly successful, we went to Boston. This was my first appearance in the modern Athens, and I saw much that was new and interesting to me. I attended various churches, and was pleased to see such an almost universal observance of the Sabbath.⁵ The theatres, too, were not permitted to be open on Saturday evenings, and my mind reverted to the customs of many of our neighbors in Connecticut, who, according to the old Puritan fashion, "kept Saturday night," that is, they considered that the Sabbath commenced at the setting of the sun on Saturday and closed at sundown on Sunday, at which time they would recommence their labors and recreations.

We opened our exhibition in the small ball-room of Concert Hall, at the corner of Court and Hanover streets. The fame of Joice had preceded her, the city was well posted with large bills announcing her coming, and the newspapers had heralded her anticipated arrival in such a multiplicity of styles, that the public curiosity was on tip-toe. I remember that one of the papers, after giving a description of Joice Heth, and the great satisfaction which her exhibition had given in New York, added, "*It rejoice-heth* us exceedingly to know that we shall be permitted to look upon the old patriarch."

The celebrated Maelzel⁶ was exhibiting his equally celebrated "automaton chess-player" in the large ball-room of Concert Hall; but the crowd of visitors to see Aunt Joice was so great, that our room could not accommodate them, and Mr. Maelzel was induced to close his exhibition, and give us his

⁵ See Earle: "The Sabbath in Puritan New England," pp. 253-258. [Ed.]

⁶ Johann Maelzel (1772-1838) of Ratisbon (Regensburg). The chess-player, in the likeness of a Turk, was constructed by Baron von Kempelen of Presburg, and was exhibited by Maelzel after von Kempelen's death. It was said to have been owned for a short time by Napoleon I and to have been lost in a fire in Philadelphia in 1854. Poe wrote (1835) an article on it, describing its action and offering a solution of the *modus operandi*. [Ed.]

large room. I had frequent interviews and long conversations with Mr. Maelzel. I looked upon him as the great father of caterers for public amusement, and was pleased with his assurance that I would certainly make a successful showman.

"I see," said he, in broken English, "that you understand the value of the press, and that is the great thing. Nothing helps the showmans like the types and the ink. When your old woman dies," he added, "you come to me, and I will make your fortune. I will let you have my 'carousal,' my automaton trumpet-player,⁷ and many curious things which will make plenty of money."

I thanked him for his generous proposals, and assured him that should circumstances render it feasible, I should apply to him.

Our exhibition room continued to attract large numbers of visitors for several weeks before there was any visible falling off. I kept up a constant succession of novel advertisements and unique notices in the newspapers, which tended to keep old Joice fresh in the minds of the public, and served to sharpen the curiosity of the people.

When the audience began to decrease in numbers, a short communication appeared in one of the newspapers, signed "A Visitor," in which the writer claimed to have made an important discovery. He stated that Joice Heth, as at present exhibited, was a humbug, whereas if the simple truth was told in regard to the exhibition, it was really vastly curious and interesting. "The fact is," said the communication, "Joice Heth is not a human being. What purports to be a remarkably old woman is simply a curiously constructed automaton, made up of whalebone, india-rubber, and numberless springs ingeniously put together, and made to move at the slightest touch, according to the will of the operator. The exhibitor is a ventriloquist, and all the conversations apparently held with the ancient lady

⁷ Maelzel's automaton trumpeter was a life-size figure with the instrument fixed in its mouth. When it had been wound up, it executed marches and other pieces, with the accompaniment of a real band. [Ed.]

CONTINUALLY CROWDED

are purely imaginary, so far as she is concerned, for the answers and incidents purporting to be given and related by her, are merely the ventriloquial voice of the exhibitor."

Maelzel's ingenious mechanism somewhat prepared the way for this announcement, and hundreds who had not visited Joice Heth were now anxious to see the curious automaton; while many who had seen her were equally desirous of a second look, in order to determine whether or not they had been deceived. The consequence was, our audiences again largely increased.

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From Boston we went to Hingham, and thence in succession to Lowell, Worcester, Springfield, and Hartford, meeting with most satisfactory success. Everywhere there appeared to be conviction of the extreme longevity of Joice.

We hastened our return to New York to fill a second engagement I had made with Mr. Niblo. The American Institute held its annual fair at his garden, and my engagement was to commence at the same time. The great influx of visitors to the fair caused our room to be continually crowded, insomuch that we were frequently compelled to announce to applicants that the hall was full, and no more could be admitted for the present. In those cases we would hurry up the exhibitions, cut short a hymn or two, answer questions with great rapidity, and politely open the front door as an egress to visitors, at the same time opening the entrance from the garden for the ingress of fresh customers.

From Niblo's we went to New Haven for three days, where the crowds were as large as usual. We then returned to New York and proceeded to Newark, where I met with the usual success. From Newark we returned to New York and went to Albany for one week to fill an engagement made with Mr. Meech, the proprietor of the Museum.

While exhibiting there, light evening entertainments were

given in the theatre of the Museum, one part of which consisted of remarkable feats of balancing, plate spinning, stilt walking, etc., by "Signor Antonio." The balancing and spinning of crockery was nearly or quite new in this country — to me it was entirely so. It was also as surprising as it was novel. The daring feats of Antonio upon stilts, his balancing guns with the bayonets resting on his nose, and various other performances which I had never seen before, attracted my attention. I inquired of Mr. Meech where Antonio came from. He informed me that he was an Italian — had sailed from England to Canada, whence he had proceeded to Albany, and had never exhibited in any other American city. Learning that Mr. Meech did not desire his services after that week, I sought an interview with "Antonio" and in ten minutes engaged him to perform for me in any portion of the United States for one year from date, at the salary of \$12 per week, besides board and traveling expenses. I did not know exactly where I should use my protégé, but I was certain that there was money in him, and thus I became interested in my second show.

Antonio, Joice Heth, Lyman, and myself, left Albany for New York, stopping at the private boarding house in Frankfort street which I had taken the spring previous, but had sold out soon after engaging Aunt Joice. I left my two shows in Frankfort street while I went to join my wife and daughter, who were boarding with a Mr. Knapp, in Cherry street.

The first favor which I asked of Antonio was, that he should submit to be thoroughly washed — an operation to which he had apparently been a stranger for several years; and the second, that he should change his name. I did not think "Antonio" sufficiently "foreign," hence I named him Signor Vivalla, to both which propositions he consented. I immediately wrote a notice announcing the extraordinary qualities of Signor Vivalla, who had just arrived from Italy, elaborately setting forth the wonders of his performances. This was published as an article of news in one of the city papers, and I forwarded a dozen

copies to the several theatrical managers in New York, and elsewhere.

I first called upon William Dinneford, Esq., manager of the Franklin Theatre, but he declined engaging the "eminent Italian artist." He had seen so many performances of that kind which were vastly more extraordinary than any thing which Vivalla could do, he would not think of engaging him.

"Now," says I, "Mr. Dinneford, I beg your pardon, but I must be permitted to say that you are mistaken. You have no doubt seen strange things in your life, but, my dear sir, I should never have imported Signor Vivalla from Italy, unless I had authentic evidence that he was the only artist of the kind who ever left that country."

"What are your terms?" asked Dinneford, who (like many worthy young ladies, and many other republicans of the first water) was evidently beginning to melt under the magic influence of a foreign importation.

"You shall have him one night for nothing," I replied. "If you like him after one trial, you shall have him the remainder of the week for fifty dollars — but, understand me, this is only that the public may be able to see what he is. After that, my terms are \$50 per night."

My proposition for the one night was accepted. I invoked the powers of "printer's ink" and wood-cuts for three days and nights previous to the first appearance of "the renowned and extraordinary Italian artist, Signor Vivalla," and they were potent for my purpose. The house was crammed. I marched upon the stage as a supernumerary to assist Vivalla in arranging his plates and other "crockery ware," to hand him the gun to fire when he had divested himself of one of his stilts, and was hopping across the stage on one stilt ten feet high, and to aid him in handling his muskets, etc. *This was my "first appearance on any stage."*

The applause which followed each of the Italian's feats was tremendous. It was such as only a Chatham or a Bowery audience could give. Manager Dinneford was delighted, and before

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we left the stage he engaged Vivalla for the week. At the termination of the performances Vivalla was called before the curtain, and as I did not consider it policy for him to be able to speak English (although he could do so very well, having travelled several years in England), I went out with him and addressed the audience in his name, thanking them for their generosity, and announcing him for the remainder of the week.

In the mean time I had opened the exhibition of Joice Heth in the large hall at the junction of the Bowery and Division street, but as I saw that Vivalla's prospects were bright, and that his success would depend in a great measure upon management, I left Lyman to exhibit Joice. After she had remained in that location for several weeks, he took her to several towns in Connecticut and elsewhere. Vivalla remained a second week at the Franklin Theatre, for which I received \$150 — immediately after which, I realized the same sum for his services one week in Boston; and then we proceeded to Washington city to fulfil an engagement I had made with Wemyss, my profits depending on the receipts.

The theatre in Washington was a small, out-of-the-way place, and we opened, January 16, 1836, to a house not exceeding \$30. It was a hard beginning, for the stipulations required \$50 more before I was entitled to a penny!

This was my first visit to Washington, and I was much interested in viewing the United States Capitol,⁸ and other Government buildings, and satisfied a laudable curiosity by having pointed out to me, in their seats in Congress, Clay, Calhoun, Benton, Webster,⁹ J. Q. Adams, Polk, Richard M. Johnson, etc.

Mr. Polk was then Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Mr. Van Buren, who was then Vice-President of the United States, of course presided over the Senate. I had an

⁸ At that time, the Capitol, as left by Bulfinch, lacked the marble wings it now has, and its dome was flat-topped and only about half as high as the present one. [Ed.]

⁹ Webster's name was omitted from the 1869 version and subsequently. [Ed.]

opportunity one afternoon, while in the gallery of the Senate, to witness the extraordinary powers of self-control which Mr. Van Buren possesses.¹⁰ In those days of high political excitement, he was called by his enemies "Reynard the Fox," "the Little Magician," etc.; and in fact he was looked upon by many persons as a man so wily as to be able to circumvent every body and every thing short of "Old Horny" himself.

Mr. Calhoun rose to speak. He was intensely excited, and spoke very rapidly as follows: "Mr. President, I am continually annoyed by newspapers sent to me from the New England States, in which are set forth the principles and designs of a class of—I will not say men, for they deserve not the title; but a class of *ingrates*, known as Abolitionists. With your permission, sir, I will read an extract from a newspaper which I received by mail this morning, and which I now hold in my hand."

Mr. Calhoun then read a most violent and bitter attack upon the southern slaveholders, denouncing them as man-stealers, pirates, robbers, murderers, men who set at nought every requirement of the decalogue, and who richly deserved to be butchered by their own slaves. In fact, the editor advised the slaves to execute immediate and bloody vengeance upon their masters.

A thrill of indignation against the editor, whoever he might be, ran through the assembly, and Mr. Calhoun continued: "The political character of this paper, Mr. President, can be judged by the following names which I read from the head thereof: For President, Martin Van Buren, of New York; for Vice-President, R. M. Johnson, of Kentucky."

The Senate was convulsed with laughter at this palpable hit. Meanwhile Mr. Van Buren maintained a countenance as placid as a May morning, and the keenest eye could not have detected the slightest evidence that he was any more interested in the speech of Mr. Calhoun than an infant. Mr. Calhoun

¹⁰ This was published in 1855. Van Buren lived to be nearly eighty (1782-1862). He was Vice-President in 1833-1837, during Jackson's second term. [Ed.]

continued for twenty minutes to denounce the administration in the most scathing language. Van Buren manifested the utmost unconcern, and when the speech was finished, he beckoned to Mr. King, of Alabama, who took the chair, while "Little Matty" quietly walked about among the Senators, shaking hands and smilingly conversing with them.

I called on Anne Royall, the authoress of the "Black Book," who at that time was quite a celebrated personage.¹¹ She published a little paper entitled "Paul Pry." I had exchanged with her while I edited the "Herald of Freedom"; she strongly sympathized with me in my persecutions, and was now delighted to see me — she was even boisterous in her assurances of that fact.

Anne was the most garrulous old woman I ever saw. Her tongue ran like wildfire. She said when she first saw me she thought it was Clayburn,¹² meaning the member of Congress from Mississippi.

"I expect Clayburn here every minute," says she. "Do you know," she continued, "that he is a terrible wag? Yes, Barnum, that Clayburn once passed himself off on me as a clergyman. But never mind, I forgive him, for he is a good fellow after all."

"Come, Sally, put the things in order," said Mrs. Royall (addressing her help-mate, a tall woman of about thirty, somewhat ragged and considerably dirty), "get things to rights; you know I am expecting several of the members here this morning. Oh, yes, Mr. Barnum, all the Congressmen call on me; they dare not do otherwise. Enemies and friends all alike, they have to come to me. And why should they not? I made them — every devil of them. You see how I look, ragged and poor, but thank God I am saucy and independent. The whole

¹¹ This lady, whom J. Q. Adams described as going about "like a virago-errant in enchanted armor," was once indicted by the grand jury as a common scold and threatened with the ducking-stool (in accordance with an old English law that then continued in force in the District of Columbia). [Ed.]

¹² Properly "Claiborne" — John F. H. Claiborne (1809–1884), member of the House in 1835–1838. [Ed.]

Government is afraid of me, and well they may be. I know them all, from top to toe — I can fathom their rascality through all its ins and outs, from the beginning to the end. By the way, Barnum, whom do you support for President and Vice-President?”

“Well, I believe I shall go for Matty and Richard M.,” meaning Martin Van Buren and Richard M. Johnson.

I have seen some fearful things in my day — some awful explosions of tempestuous passion; but never have I witnessed such another terrible tempest of fury as burst from Mrs. Anne Royall, in reply to my response. After a minute, during which her utterance was choked, she broke forth as follows — I kept a diary in those days, and I here copy *verbatim*:

“My God! my God! is it possible? Will you support such a monkey, such a scoundrel, such a villain, such a knave, such an enemy to his country, as Martin Van Buren! Barnum, you are a scoundrel, a traitor, a rascal, a hypocrite! You are a spy, an electioneering fool, and I hope the next vessel you put foot on will sink with you.”

“Ha! ha! ha! no, you don’t.”

“Oh, you villain! laugh, will you? when your country is in danger! laugh, when fire-arms are in preparation to destroy your country! Oh, you don’t believe it, but let me tell you, the conspirators know too much to let you foolish Yankees into their secret. Remember, I was once with them, and I know all about it.”

“Why, Anne, you must acknowledge there are some good people in our ranks.”

“No, I don’t. There’s not one devil of you who cares a cent for his country. You would not give a farthing to save it from destruction. See how I live! see how I work to save my country! I am at work every moment — see my house — see, I have no bed to lie on — no any thing — and then *you* tell about loving your country! Oh, you deserve to be lynched, every devil of you!”

In this style Anne raved for half an hour. I occasionally

laughed, which made her worse, and if I tried to slip in a word of excuse, she would exclaim:

"There, that's the way with you Yankees; you won't hear anybody, and that is the reason you don't know any thing."

At last she talked herself out of breath. I had formed a pretty correct idea of Anne's character, and felt assured, therefore, that although she was a monomaniac upon political subjects, she was nevertheless a good-hearted, generous woman, and that all her present ranting was but an ebullition of her eccentricity, and not any evidence of her disliking me. And so it proved, for, lowering her voice into a calm, she turned the conversation as follows:

"Well, Barnum, you are a good fellow, and I am really glad to see you. How sorry I am that we mentioned politics, for I am so nervous. Now, I want a real good talk with you."

Sally here announced that the papers were ready for mailing, upon which Anne started up and said, "Come, Barnum, go with me into the printing-office, and there we can talk and work together."

We proceeded to a small brick building, near the house, and after experiencing some difficulty in climbing up a dirty pair of stairs, and groping our way through a dark passage in the second story, we reached the printing-office of the "Paul Pry." The whole force of the establishment consisted of one man and a boy. A pile of newspapers in wrappers, and all directed to their places of destination, lay upon the middle of the floor.

"Now, Barnum," said Anne, "I am going to sort these papers for the mails, for our lazy officials in the post-office would not do it in a week, and you shall help me; so sit right down on the floor by my side, and we can work and talk together."

Anne then seated herself upon the dirty floor, and as there was no chair in the room, I sat down beside her, not daring even to spread my handkerchief or in any way remove the dust, lest she should construe it into an insult.

In this way I spent another half-hour with Anne, aiding her

VEHEMENT AND VIOLENT

in assorting her papers, and keeping up with her a very agreeable conversation, during which she gave me briefly her history, which I cannot spare space to record.

Before leaving her, my showman propensities were manifest, inasmuch as I tried to hire her to give a dozen or twenty public lectures upon Government, in the Atlantic cities; but she was not to be tempted by pecuniary reward, and I was obliged to give over that speculation, which, by the way, I am certain would have proved a profitable one.

Upon parting with Mrs. Royall she seemed very grateful to me for calling on her, and said I must certainly never visit Washington without spending a few hours with her. To this I agreed, but never again met the eccentric old lady.

Since writing the foregoing, Mrs. Royall has departed this life. I cut the following slip from a New York paper of October 5, 1854:

Mrs. Anne Royall died at her residence in Washington, on Sunday morning, October 1st, 1854, at a very advanced age. She was the widow of a Revolutionary officer, Colonel William Royall, and she published a newspaper in Washington for many years, first as the "Paul Pry," which name was afterward changed to "The Huntress." The "Washington Star" says:

"Ever since the publication of the famous history of her peregrinations throughout the country, fighting the Presbyterians, she has made her residence here. For the last four or five years she has been out and about very little, owing to her increasing infirmities. When about, however, her tongue went as before — always so as to attract a crowd of wonderers around her. Vehement and violent in her antipathies, and the expression of them, she was equally warm in her friendship for those she favored, though from her peculiar way of manifesting her likings, few, indeed, courted her affectionate regards. To the hour of her death she preserved all the peculiarities of thought, temper, and manners, which at one time rendered her so famous throughout the land."

There was incessant snow in Washington during Vivalla's engagement, and I was so unexpectedly a loser by the opera-

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tion, that I had not sufficient funds to return to Philadelphia. After much hesitation, and with a deep feeling of sadness and humiliation, I pawned my watch and chain for thirty-five dollars, promising to redeem it within a month. Fortunately, however, Mr. Wemyss arrived on Saturday morning, bringing with him Lucius Junius Booth¹³ and Miss Waring, afterwards Mrs. Sefton. Mr. Wemyss loaned me thirty-five dollars, and I redeemed my watch, paying a dollar for the use of the money a few hours.

Vivalla and myself proceeded to Philadelphia, and opened at the Walnut-street, on the 26th, to a slim house. The sleighing was good and theatricals dull. Hadaway, the popular actor, at present engaged at my Museum, was the low comedian at the Walnut, and appeared just as old then as now.¹⁴ I then thought him one of the most chaste and effective comedians of the day, and I think the same of him still. His laugh, his walk, his every look and act is comic — he must be droll in spite of himself — every tone and modulation of his voice is truly comic. He never utters a vulgar expression, never overacts his part — but possesses a most judicious mind, which, ever bent upon his profession, had made him, with his excellent personal habits, a most worthy and justly popular actor.

“Signor Vivalla’s” performances were well received. On the second night, however, I heard two or three distinct hisses from the pit. It was the first time that my protégé had received the slightest mark of disapprobation since I had engaged him, and I was surprised. Vivalla, who, under my management, had become proud of his profession, was excessively annoyed. I proceeded, therefore, to that portion of the house whence the hissing emanated, and found that it came from a circus performer

¹³ Junius Brutus Booth the elder. [Ed.]

¹⁴ This appeared in 1855. Thomas H. Hadaway, an English actor (1801–1882), came to America with his wife in 1831. In Philadelphia he was the principal comedian successively of the Chestnut, Walnut, and Arch street theatres. In New York he acted at the Bowery, the Broadway, and Burton’s; and later was for fifteen years a member of the company at Barnum’s American Museum. [Ed.]

CONSIDERABLE BRAVADO

named Roberts and his friends. It seems that Roberts was a balancer and juggler, and he declared he could do all that Vivalla could. I was certain he could *not*, and told him so. Some hard words ensued. I then proceeded to the ticket-office, where I wrote several copies of a "card," and proceeding to the printing-offices of various newspapers, climbing up narrow stairs and threading dark alleys for the purpose, I secured its appearance in the papers of the next morning. The card was headed "*One Thousand Dollars Reward!*" and then proceeded to state that Signor Vivalla would pay the foregoing sum to any man who would publicly accomplish his (Vivalla's) feats, at such public place as Vivalla should designate.

Roberts came out with a card the next day, accepting Vivalla's offer, calling on him to put up the thousand dollars, to name the time and place of trial, and stating that he could be found at a certain hotel near Green's Circus, of which he was a member. I borrowed a thousand dollars of my friend Oliver Taylor — went to Mr. Warren, treasurer of the Walnut, and asked him what share of the house he would give me if I would get up an excitement that should bring in four or five hundred dollars a night. (The entire receipts the night previous were but seventy-five dollars.) He replied that he would give me one third of the gross receipts. I told him I had a crotchet in my head, and would inform him within an hour whether it would work. I then called upon Roberts and showed him my thousand dollars. "Now," says I, "I am ready to put this money in responsible hands, to be forfeited and paid to you if you accomplish Signor Vivalla's feats."

"Very well," said Roberts, with considerable bravado; "put the money into the hands of Mr. Green, the proprietor of the circus" — to which I assented.

"Now," said I, "I wish you to sign this card, to be published in handbills and in to-morrow's newspapers." He read it. It stated that Signor Vivalla having placed one thousand dollars in hands satisfactory to himself, to be forfeited to him if he succeeded in performing the various feats of the said Vivalla,

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he (Roberts) would make the public trial to do so on the stage of the Walnut-street Theatre on the night of the 30th inst.

"You don't expect me to perform *all* of Vivalla's feats, do you?" said Roberts, after reading the card.

"No, I don't *expect* you *can*, but if you do *not*, of course, you will not win the thousand dollars," I replied.

"Why, I know nothing about walking on stilts, and am not fool enough to risk my neck in that way," said Roberts.

Several persons, circus-riders and others, had crowded around us, and exhibited some degree of excitement. My thousand dollars was still openly displayed in my hand. I saw that Roberts was determined to back out, and as that would not be consistent with my plans, I remarked that he and I could do our own business without the intermeddling of third parties, and I would like to see him alone. He took me up-stairs to his room, and bolting the door, I thus addressed him:

"Now, Roberts, you said to the public in your card that you accepted Vivalla's offer. What was that offer? Why, that he would give a thousand dollars to the man who could accomplish his feats. Now, you may spin a plate or two as well as Vivalla, but Vivalla spins ten plates at once, and I doubt whether you can do it — if not, you lose the reward. Again, you confess that you cannot perform on stilts. Of course, then, you don't accomplish his feats, and therefore you could not receive the thousand dollars."

"But I can toss balls and do tricks which Vivalla can't accomplish," said Roberts.

"I have no doubt of that," I replied, "but that has nothing to do with Vivalla's offer."

"Oh, I see," said Roberts, in a huff, "you have fixed up a Yankee card to suit yourself, and left a hole to sneak out of."

"Not at all, Mr. Roberts. I have made a specific offer, and am ready to fulfil it. Do not fret nor be angry, for you shall find me your friend instead of an enemy."

I then inquired whether he was engaged to Mr. Green.

"Not at present," he replied, "as the circus is closed."

THE CONTEST

"Well," I responded, "it is evident you cannot gain the thousand dollars. I did not intend you should, but I will give you \$30 if you will perform under my directions one night at the Walnut-street Theatre, and will keep your own counsel."

He consented to this, and I then asked him to sign the card, and give himself no uneasiness. He signed, and I had it thoroughly published, first closing my bargain with the treasurer of the Walnut for one third of the gross receipts on the trial night, provided there was \$400 in the house.

The next day I brought Roberts and Vivalla privately together, and by practising they soon discovered what tricks each could accomplish, and we then proceeded to arrange the manner in which the trial should come off, and how it should terminate.

In the mean time the excitement about the coming trial of skill was fast increasing. Suitable "notices" were inserted in the papers, bragging that Roberts was an American, and could beat the foreigner all hollow. Roberts in the mean time announced in the papers that if, as he expected, he should obtain the thousand dollars, a portion of it should be disbursed for charitable purposes. I set "THE PRESS" at work lustily, in the shape of handbills, squibs, etc. Before the night of trial arrived, the excitement had reached fever heat. I knew that a crowded house was *un fait accompli*.

I was not disappointed. The pit and upper boxes were crowded to suffocation. In fact, the sales of tickets to these localities were stopped because no more persons could possibly gain admittance. The dress circle was not so full, though even that contained many more persons than had been in it at one time during the previous two or three months.

The contest was a very interesting one. Roberts of course was to be beaten, and it was agreed that Vivalla should at first perform his *easiest* feats, in order that the battle should be kept up as long as possible. Roberts successively performed the same feats that Vivalla did. Each party was continually cheered by his friends and hissed by his opponents. Occasionally some of

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Roberts's friends from the pit would call out, "Roberts, beat the little Frenchman!" "One Yankee is too much for two Frenchmen any time," etc. The contest lasted about forty minutes, when Roberts came forward and acknowledged himself defeated. He was obliged to give up on the feat of spinning two plates at once, one in each hand. His friends urged him to try again, but on his declining, they requested him to perform his own peculiar feats (juggling, tossing the balls, etc.). This he did, and his performances, which continued for twenty minutes, were highly applauded.

As soon as the curtain fell, the two contestants were called for. Before they went out I had concluded a private arrangement with Roberts for a month — he to perform solely as I directed. When he went before the curtain, therefore, he informed the audience that he had a lame wrist, which was indeed the fact. He further informed them that he could do more feats of various kinds than Vivalla could and he would challenge Vivalla to such a trial at any time and place he pleased, for a wager of five hundred dollars.

"I accept that challenge," said Vivalla, who stood at Roberts's side, "and I name next Tuesday night in this theatre."

"Bravo!" cried Vivalla's friends, as vigorously as "bravo" had been shouted by the friends of Roberts.

Three hearty cheers were given by the enthusiastic audience, and the antagonists, looking daggers at each other, withdrew at opposite sides of the curtain. Before the uproar of applause had ceased, Roberts and Vivalla had met upon the stage, shaken hands, and were enjoying a hearty laugh, while little Vivalla, with thumb to his nose, was making curious gyrations to an imaginary picture on the back of the screen, or possibly to a real *tableau vivant* in front of the curtain.

The receipts of the theatre on that night were \$593.25, of which I received one third — \$197.75.

The contest on the Tuesday night following was nearly as profitable to me as the first one, as so indeed were several similar trials of skill brought forward in Dinneford's Franklin

IN THE SLEIGH

Theatre, New York, and various other places, during the month of Roberts's engagement.

These details may possess little interest to the general reader. They however serve to show (though it may be revealing some of the "tricks of the trade") how such matters are frequently managed in theatres and other places of amusement. The people are repeatedly wrought to excitement and take sides most enthusiastically in trials of skill, when, if the truth were known, the whole affair is a piece of management between the prominent parties. The entertainment of the time may be an offset to the "humbug" of the transaction, and it may be doubted whether managers or theatres will be losers by these revelations of mine, for the public appears disposed to be amused even when they are conscious of being deceived.

Meanwhile poor old Joice had sickened, and with her attendant, a faithful colored woman whom I hired in Boston, had gone to my brother's house in Bethel, where she was provided with warm apartments and the best medical and other assistance.

On the 21st of February, 1836, my brother's horses and sleigh stopped at the door of my boarding-house in New York. The driver handed me a letter from my brother Philo, stating that Aunt Joice was no more. She died at his house on Friday night, the 19th, and her body was then in the sleigh, having been conveyed to New York for me to dispose of as I thought proper. I at once determined to have it returned to Bethel and interred in our village burial-ground, though for the present it was placed in a small room of which I had the key.

The next morning I called on an eminent surgeon who, upon visiting Joice at Niblo's had expressed a desire to institute a post-mortem examination if she should die in this country. I agreed that he should have the opportunity, if unfortunately it should occur while she was under my protection. I now informed him that Aunt Joice was dead, and he reminded me of my promise. I admitted it, and immediately proceeded to arrange for the examination to take place on the following day.

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

In the mean time a mahogany coffin and plate were procured and taken to the hall where the examination was to take place. A large number of physicians, students, and several clergymen and editors were present. Among the last-named class was Richard Adams Locke, author of the celebrated "Moon Hoax,"¹⁵ who was at that time editor of the New York "Sun."

An absence of ossification of the arteries in the immediate region of the heart was deemed by the dissector and most of the gentlemen present an evidence against the assumed age of Joice.

When all had withdrawn excepting the surgeon, his particular friend Locke, Lyman, and myself, the surgeon remarked, addressing me, that there was surely some mistake in regard to the alleged age of Joice; that instead of being 161 years old, she was probably not over eighty.

I stated to him, in reply, what was strictly true, that I had hired Joice in perfect good faith, and relied upon her appearance and the documents as evidence of the truth of her story. The same gentleman had examined her when alive on exhibition at Niblo's. He rejoined that he had no doubt I had been deceived in the matter, that her personal appearance really did indicate extreme longevity, but that the documents must either have been forged, or else they applied to some other individual.

Lyman, who was always ready for a joke, no matter what the cost nor at whose expense, here made a remark regarding the inability of the faculty to decide with much precision in regard to a case of this kind. His observations wounded the feelings of the surgeon, and taking the arm of his friend Locke, they left the hall — I fear in not very good humor.

¹⁵ In 1835 Locke published in the "Sun" a series of articles on "Great Astronomical Discoveries Lately Made by Sir John Herschel . . . at the Cape of Good Hope." This "feature" greatly increased the paper's circulation; and when it was put into a pamphlet, 20,000 copies were quickly sold. Although the articles were popularly styled "the Moon Hoax," Locke himself was said to have declared that they were originally intended as a satire on certain astronomers — especially Dr. Thomas Dick of Dundee, Scotland. Locke was highly praised by Poe in a critical memoir. [Ed.]

A WORD IN REPLY

The "Sun" of the next day (February 25, 1836) contained an editorial, written of course by Locke, commencing as follows:

DISSECTION OF JOICE HETH.—PRECIOUS HUMBUG EXPOSED.—The anatomical examination of the body of Joice Heth yesterday, resulted in the exposure of one of the most precious humbugs that ever was imposed upon a credulous community.

Mr. Locke then proceeded to give a scientific account of the dissection, and the reasons he had for doubting her story.

Here let me say a word in reply to the captious who may claim that I was over-credulous in accepting the story of Joice and her exhibitor, as a matter of fact. I assert, then, that when Joice Heth was living, I never met with six persons out of the many thousands who visited her, who seemed to doubt the claim of her age and history. Hundreds of medical men assured me that they thought the statement of her age was correct, and Dr. Rogers himself, in his parting conversation above noted, remarked to me that he expected to have spoiled half a dozen knives in severing the ossification in the arteries around the region of the heart and chest. Indeed, Mr. Locke plainly indicated his belief in her story, by the following remarks found in the editorial from which I make the above extract:

We were half inclined to question the propriety of the scientific curiosity which prompted it [the dissection]. We felt as though the person of poor old Joice Heth should have been saved from exposure and mutilation, not so much on account of her extreme old age, and the public curiosity which she had already gratified for the gain of others, *as for the high honor with which she was endowed in being the nurse of the immortal Washington.*

Locke's editorial asserted that the age of Joice did not exceed seventy-five or eighty years.

When the "Sun" newspaper appeared, and the account of the post-mortem examination was read, thousands of persons

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who had seen her when alive, were much astonished. "There must be a mistake," said one, "for her very appearance indicated her age to have been at least a hundred and twenty." "She could not have been less than a hundred," said others; while still others believed she was quite as old as represented.

In this state of the public mind, Lyman determined to put a joke upon James Gordon Bennett, of the "Herald." He therefore called at Bennett's office and told him that we had been humbugging Dr. Rogers, that in fact Joice Heth was now being exhibited in Connecticut, and that the body which had been dissected as hers, was that of an old negress who had recently died at Harlem. Bennett swallowed the bait, hook and all. He declared it was the best hoax he ever heard of, eclipsing Locke's "Moon Hoax" entirely, and he proceeded to jot down the details as they were invented by Lyman's fertile brain. The result was, the appearance of the article from the "Sun" in the "Herald" of February 27, 1836, preceded by the following remarks:

ANOTHER HOAX! — Annexed is a long rigmarole account of the dissection of Joice Heth, extracted from yesterday's "Sun," which is nothing more nor less than a complete hoax from beginning to end. *Joice Heth is not dead.* On Wednesday last, as we learn from the best authority, she was living at Hebron, in Connecticut, where she then was. The subject on which Doctor Rogers and the Medical Faculty of Barclay street have been exercising their knife and their ingenuity, is the remains of a respectable old negress called Aunt Nelly, who has lived many years in a small house by herself, in Harlem, belonging to Mr. Clarke. She is, as Doctor Rogers sagely discovers, and Doctor Locke his colleague accurately records, only eighty years of age. Aunt Nelly before her death complained of old age and infirmity. She was otherwise in good spirits. The recent winter, however, has been very severe, and so she gave up the ghost a few days ago.

Some person in this city, we believe one of the advertising doctors who had been hoaxed by the Lunar Discoveries, in the manufacture of which it is now believed that Doctor Rogers had a principal hand along

THE "HERALD" ARTICLE

with Sir Richard A. Locke, resolved, as soon as he heard from a friend of the death of poor Aunt Nelly, to send her body into the city, and contrive to pass her off upon the Medical Faculty for the veritable Joice Heth. The trick took. Several of the hoaxed went, looked, wondered, and held up their hands in astonishment. Her death was announced in the "Sun," and a post-mortem examination prepared. The public swallowed the pill. Aunt Nelly, neglected, unknown, unpitied when alive, became an object of deep science and deeper investigation when she died. She looked as old and ugly as Joice herself, and in that respect answered the thing exactly.

Such is the true version of the hoax, as given us by good authority, of the story told in the following piece of humbug, taken from yesterday's "Sun."

This editorial preface of the "Herald" introduced the account of the dissection as it appeared in the "Sun"; and Bennett subjoined the comprehensive comment: "Thus far the Joice Heth hoax, for the veracity of which we have names and certificates in our possession."

Upon reading the article from the "Herald," a large portion of the public believed it, and consoled themselves by saying, "Ah, I was sure the old woman was considerably more than eighty. The article in the 'Herald' makes the matter all clear."

Locke insisted that he had not been humbugged, and Bennett persisted that he had, and offered to lay a wager of several hundred dollars that Joice was really alive and then being exhibited in Connecticut! After a while the editor of the "Herald," finding himself hoaxed, cried still the louder that he was right, and published several fictitious certificates purporting to have been written and signed by persons residing in Harlem, corroborating Lyman's story of "poor Aunt Nelly."

In September of the same year (while I was absent at the South), Bennett met Lyman in the street, and proceeded to "blow him sky high" for having imposed upon him. Lyman laughed; he said he only meant it as a harmless joke, and that

"now, as a recompense for the imposition, he would furnish Bennett with 'the veritable history of the rise, progress, and termination of the Joice Heth humbug.'"

Bennett was delighted. They went to his office, and Lyman dictated while the editor took down the heads of what purported to be the history of Joice — of her having been first found by me in the out-house of a plantation in Kentucky — of my having extracted all her teeth — taught her the Washington story — called her 110 years old in Louisville, 121 in Cincinnati — twenty years older in Pittsburgh, and 161 at Philadelphia.

This ridiculous story, being a ten times greater humbug than the one before practised upon the editor of the "Herald," was duly written out and embellished by Bennett, as will be found by turning to the files of the "Herald," of Thursday, September 8, and Tuesday, September 13, 1836, where the first article under the editorial head has the title in capitals, "THE JOICE HETH HOAX!" Then follow several columns, purporting to give an account of Joice from her first discovery in Kentucky until her arrival in Philadelphia. On the 17th September follows another chapter under the same caption, surmounted with a wood engraving of her portrait.

The editor of the "Herald" asserted his full belief in this second and greater humbug, by the following statement in his paper of the 8th September, already mentioned:

A full and accurate account of the hoax, perpetrated by Joice Heth and her friends, upon the cities of Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, and particularly the medical faculty of each, will be one of the most interesting histories of this singular exposition of human ingenuity on the one side — and human credulity on the other. Some of the most eminent medical men in these three cities, and especially the famous Doct. Warren of Boston, figured most conspicuously in this laughable development. *There can be no mistake about the facts related*, because we have taken them down from the lips of the very individual who originated, and carried into effect this most stupendous hoax, illustra-

GENERALLY ACCREDITED

tive of the accuracy of medical science, the skill of medical men, and the general good-nature and credulity of the public.

It would seem, by later developments, as if Bennett had never forgiven me for the ridiculous figure he was made to cut in this "Joice Heth Hoax."

The story of Lyman has since been generally accredited as the true history of the old negress, and never, until the present writing, have I said or written a word by way of contradiction or correction. Newspaper and social controversy on the subject (and seldom have vastly more important matters been so largely discussed) served my purpose as "a showman" by keeping my name before the public.

I will only add, that the remains of Joice were removed to Bethel, and buried respectably.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRAVELLING CIRCUS

Our First Performance—Incident in Church—Old Turner—A Disagreeable Joke—Tar and Feathers—The Wrong Customer—Fast Board—A Crammed Company—Arithmetical Puzzles—Sorrowful Parting—Speech in a Grove—Serious Reflections—The Dead-head Sheriff—Sharp Dodging—Conspiracy Defeated—Contracted Quarters—A Perilous Journey—Vivalla and the Indian—Courage Oozed Out—The Egg Trick—A Discomfited Juggler—Yankee Munchausen—The Mysterious Boots—A Long Nap—Living Mummies—My Uncle's Number—Legs by the Bushel—Bad Luck—A Friend in Need—A Hasty Wedding—A Sudden Departure—Advertising for a Partner—Curious Propositions—A New Business—Remnants of My Capital—A Batch of Recipes—A Showman Again—Recollections of My Tour—A Mock Diamond—In Jail Again.

My Italian, Signor Vivalla, continued to perform for me in various theatres and circuses, as well as at Peale's Museum in New York. I also took him to Danbury, Bridgeport, New Haven, Norwalk, and other places in Connecticut; and to Newark, Elizabethtown, Rahway, and New Brunswick, N. J., where I generally met with poor success, the expenses, licenses, etc., frequently exceeding the receipts.

In April, 1836, I arranged with Aaron Turner, a circus proprietor (father of the celebrated riders N. B. and T. V. Turner), to connect Vivalla with his travelling circus company for the ensuing summer. I was to be paid for Vivalla the nominal salary of \$50 per month and two half-clear benefits, and \$30 per month for myself; and also, in consideration of Vivalla's and my own services, I was to receive one fifth of the entire profits of the circus company. I was at this time paying Vivalla \$80 per month, so that *his* and *my* nominal salary united, reimbursed my payment, and left me the chance of

SCANTY FARE

20 per cent. of the net receipts for my profits. I was to act as ticket-seller, secretary, and treasurer.

Mr. Turner was an old showman. To me, this travelling and performing in canvas tents was altogether new.¹ I removed my wife and little daughter Caroline to Bethel, where they resided in the dwelling-house over the yellow store.²

On Tuesday, the 26th April, our circus company, with all its paraphernalia of wagons, carriages, tents, horses, ponies, band of music, and about thirty-five men and boys, took up its march from Danbury for West Springfield, Mass., where we were to perform on Thursday. The first day, instead of halting on the road to dine as I expected we should, Mr. Turner stopped at a country farmhouse, bought three loaves of rye bread and a pound of butter; then, borrowing a knife from the farmer's wife, he proceeded to cut off pieces of bread, spread them lightly with butter, and handed one to each man. The bread and butter were soon consumed; Turner paid the woman fifty cents, ordered his men to water the horses, and we proceeded on our journey, having tarried less than fifteen minutes.

I thought this was rather scanty fare, and my little Italian began to grumble. I pacified him by the assurance that we should do better after we once commenced performing. There was an opportunity to test the prophecy at West Springfield, where we arrived on the 28th, and began our performances for the season.

Our band of music, expected from Providence, had not arrived, and, at Turner's request, I preceded the performance

¹ Nathan A. ("Nate") Howes of Southeast, Putnam county, N. Y., and Aaron Turner of Danbury, Conn., organized a road company for acrobatic displays and feats of horsemanship; and this is credited with having been the first such American company to appear under full-top canvas. Before that, only side-canvas had been used. Greenwood says that Turner "was an Englishman who came out to America in 1817." [Ed.]

² These were the rooms that Barnum had previously advertised in the "Herald of Freedom" (e.g., the issue of September 3, 1834): "The Subscriber will rent to a small family, on reasonable terms, the second story of the Yellow Store in Bethel, if application is made soon." [Ed.]

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with a speech announcing the disappointment, and our determination to please the audience even in the absence of music.

The two Turner boys rode admirably. Joe Pentland, the clown, was, and still is,³ one of the most witty, original, and chaste men in his line in the country. He made up in a great measure for the absence of the band, and this, together with Vivalla's performances and other exercises in the ring, gave satisfaction to the small audience. Our music arrived in a day or two, and we continued to give one or two performances every week-day, our "houses" constantly growing better as the season advanced. We performed in numerous towns, villages, and cities in New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, and North Carolina, and my diary refreshes my memory with many incidents in the progress of our tour. I have space in these pages for only a few.

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As was usually my custom, on the Sabbath I attended church in Lenox, Mass. The clergyman took occasion to declaim against our circus; said that all men connected with circuses were destitute of morality, etc. In fact, he called us such hard names, that I wrote a request to be permitted to reply to him, and asked him to give notice from the pulpit that I should do so. I signed it, "P. T. Barnum, connected with the circus, June 5, 1836"; and as soon as he had read the closing hymn, I walked up the pulpit-stairs and handed him the request. He declined noticing it, and immediately after the benediction was pronounced, I strongly lectured him for not granting me an opportunity to vindicate our characters, gave him my opinion of a slanderer, etc.

This incident caused great commotion in the village. Several members of his church apologized for their clergyman's conduct. They said that he had recently lectured them for permit-

³ That is, in 1855. [Ed.]

AN ORIGINAL GENIUS

ting their children to speak in dialogue at an exhibition of the village-school, censured him for his course regarding the circus, and hoped I would not hold the church responsible for his ill behavior. I was satisfied, and, as Louis Napoleon would say, "tranquillity was restored."

A similar scene subsequently occurred at Port Deposit, on the lower Susquehanna, though in the latter case I insisted on addressing the audience in defence of ourselves from personal assault. I did so for half an hour, and the people attentively listened to me, though the clergyman repeatedly begged them to disperse. I sincerely thought myself entitled to this hearing. Many a time had I collected the circus company on the Sabbath, and read to them the Bible and such printed sermons as I could obtain, and I had repeatedly induced many of them to accompany me to public worship in the towns and villages in our route. We certainly had no religion to boast of, but we felt ourselves not altogether "castaways" and thought we were entitled to gentlemanly treatment at least when in attendance on the gospel ministry.

Aaron Turner, the proprietor of the circus, was an original genius; a good judge of human nature, a man from whom much information might be derived. He was withal a *practical joker*. By his untiring industry he amassed a large fortune, and was not a little proud to inform the world that he commenced life without a shilling. Frequently have I heard him say, "Every man who has good health and common sense is capable of making a fortune, if he only *resolves* to do so. As a proof of it, look at me. Who am I? I don't know who I am, or where I came from. I never had father nor mother that I know of; at all events, I must have started from the lowest depths of degradation. I never had any education; I commenced life as a shoemaker. What little I can read, I picked up myself after I was eighteen years of age; and as for writing, why the way I first learned that, was by signing my name to notes of hand! I used at first to make my mark, but being a poor devil, I had occasion to give my note so often that I finally learned to write

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my name, and so I have got along by degrees. You see what I am now. I have become so by industry, perseverance, and economy; and any man may become rich who will *determine* to do so. There is not such a word as ‘*cannot*’ in the English language. Never say you *can’t* do a thing — and never cry ‘broke’ till you are dead.”

While in Annapolis, Md., Turner played a trick upon me which I shall never forget. We arrived there late on a Saturday evening. We had been doing a highly profitable business, which made me feel pretty rich, and I went out that night and bought me a fine suit of black clothes. We were all strangers in that town, never having been there before. On Sunday morning, feeling proud of my sable suit, I dressed myself, and started to stroll about the town. I passed through the bar-room of the hotel. About twenty persons were there, among whom was Turner, who had by that time made their acquaintance. After I passed out, Turner, pointing in the direction which I had taken, remarked to the company, “I think it’s very singular you permit that rascal to march your streets in open day. It wouldn’t be allowed in Rhode Island, and I suppose that is the reason the black-coated scoundrel has come down this way.”

“Why, who is he?” ejaculated half a dozen at once.

“Don’t you know? Why, that is the Rev. E. K. Avery, the murderer of Miss Cornell!” answered Turner.*

“Is it possible!” they exclaimed, all starting for the door, eager to get a look at me, and several swearing vengeance against the hypocritical priest.

* The then recent murder of Miss Cornell in Rhode Island, her discovery in a stack-yard, and the trial of Rev. Ephraim K. Avery for the deed, created unparalleled excitement. Leading Methodists defended the accused, but in vain. The general sentiment of the whole country condemned him, and though acquitted by the law, he sunk into disgrace and obscurity. The Lord knows all the facts, and will judge righteously. — [In 1833 the “Herald of Freedom” devoted considerable space to Avery’s trial before the Supreme Judicial Court of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. The story of the case has been told in E. L. Pearson’s “The Murder at Smutty Nose” (1926). — Ed.]

Turner having thus put the ball in motion, quietly took a seat, while every person in the bar-room started in pursuit of me. I had turned a corner of the street, and was very innocently, though rather pompously, strutting down the side-walk, when I was overtaken by a dozen or more persons, whose number increased every moment. I observed, as they passed me, that each person looked back and stared at me with apparent wonder. I believe I must have been uncommonly proud of that suit of clothes, for I was vain enough to believe that my *new suit* was what attracted such special attention. I however soon awoke from the happy illusion. The mob passed me five or ten rods, and waited till I came up to them. As I passed, I heard several observations like the following: “The lecherous old hypocrite” — “the sanctified murderer” — “the black-coated villain” — “let’s tar and feather him” — “lynch the scoundrel,” etc., etc. I passed along totally unconscious that these remarks could possibly have any reference to me. The *dénouement*, however, soon came. The mob, which now numbered at least one hundred, overtook me as I passed another corner, and one fellow seized me by the collar, while five or six others approached, bearing a *rail* between them.

“Come,” says the man who collared me, “old chap, you can’t walk any farther; we know you, and as we always make gentlemen *ride* in these parts, you may just prepare to straddle that *rail*!”

My surprise may well be imagined. “Good heavens!” I exclaimed, as they all pressed around me. “Gentlemen, what have I done?”

“Oh, we know you,” exclaimed half a dozen voices; “you needn’t roll your sanctimonious eyes; that game don’t take in this country. Come, straddle the rail, and *remember the stack-yard*!”

I grew more and more bewildered; it seemed like a dream; I could not imagine what possible offence I was to suffer for, and I continued to exclaim, “Gentlemen, what have I done? Don’t kill me, gentlemen, but tell me what I have done.”

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"Come, make him straddle the rail; we'll show him how to hang poor factory girls," shouted some chap from the crowd.

The men who had me by the collar then remarked, "Come, Mr. Avery, it's no use, you see we know you, and we'll give you a touch of Lynch law, and start you for home again."

"My name is *not* Avery, gentlemen; you are mistaken in your man," I exclaimed.

"Come, come, none of your gammon; straddle the rail, Ephraim," said the man who had me by the collar.

The rail was brought to such a level as to allow me to be "straddled" on it without difficulty, and I was about to be placed according to orders, as the truth flashed upon me.

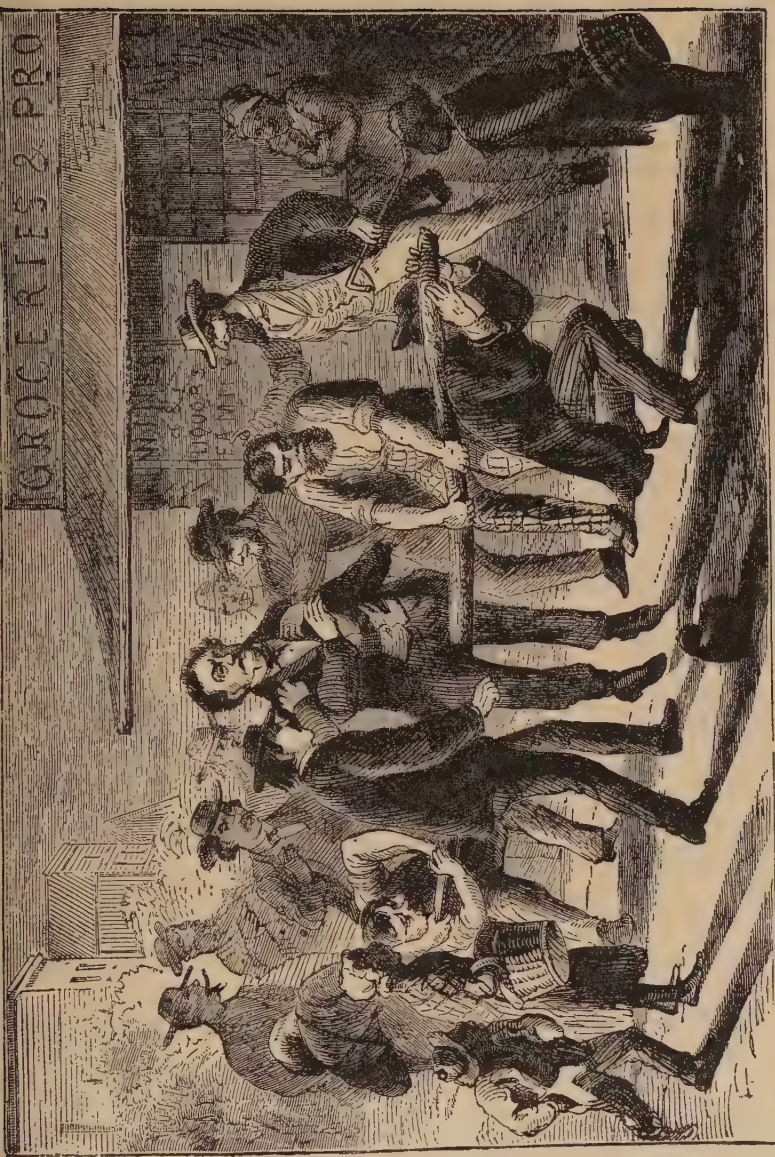
"Gentlemen," I exclaimed, "I am not Avery; I despise that villain as much as you can; but my name is Barnum; I belong to the circus which arrived here last night, and I am sure Old Turner, my partner, has hoaxed you with this ridiculous story."

"If he has, we'll lynch him," said one of the mob.

"Well, he has, I'll assure you," I replied; "so just walk to the hotel with me, and I'll convince you of the fact."

This arrangement they reluctantly assented to, keeping, however, a close hand upon me. As we walked up the main street on which the new State House is situated, the mob received a reinforcement of some fifty or sixty, and I was marched like a malefactor up to the hotel. Old Turner stood on the piazza ready to burst with laughter. I appealed to him for heaven's sake to explain this matter, that I might be liberated. He continued to laugh, but finally told them he believed there was some mistake about it. "The fact is," said he, "my friend Barnum has a new suit of black clothes on, and it makes him look so much like a priest, I concluded it must be Avery."

The mob saw the joke. Some apologized to me for the rough manner in which I had been handled (for they had torn my coat half off my back, and rolled me in the dirt considerably), while others swore that Old Turner deserved the fate intended for me; but the majority of the people roared with laughter, declared it was a good joke, and advised me to look sharp, and



From the 1869 "Struggles and Triumphs."

"You Are Mistaken in Your Man!"

BARNUM AND THE CROWD AT ANNAPOLIS

The artist shows Barnum on the rail, though Barnum's words are: "I was about to be placed on it"; and P. T., only twenty-six at the time, is depicted as he was in later years.

THE STUBBORN LANDLORD

pay my partner off for it. I was exceedingly vexed, and when the mob had dispersed, I asked Old Turner what on earth could induce him to play such an outrageously mean trick upon me.

"My dear Barnum," said he, "it was all for our good. Remember, all we need to insure success is *notoriety*. You will see that this will be noised all about town as a trick played by one of the circus managers upon the other, and our pavilion will be crammed to-morrow night."

It turned out as he conjectured. The joke was in every person's mouth. We soon became acquainted with the whole town, and had immense audiences during our stay. This, however, did not induce me to forgive Old Turner, for I knew full well that self-interest was an after-consideration in this case, the joke being prompted solely by a desire to see some fun, no matter at whose expense.

A peculiar incident occurred at Hanover Court House in Virginia. In consequence of heavy rains we could not perform there, and concluded to start for Richmond immediately after dinner. The landlord however informed us that as our agent had engaged three meals and lodging for the company, our bill would be the same if we departed that day as if we remained to breakfast next morning. We backed our remonstrance with an offer to pay for dinner and a portion of the balance of the bill, to compensate for provisions obtained and not consumed, but the landlord stubbornly refused to abate a jot of his first demand.

It was now about eleven o'clock in the forenoon. Mr. Turner was very angry at what he considered the unreasonable demands of the landlord, and told him it would be much to our benefit if we could proceed at once to Richmond.

"I don't prevent you," said the stubborn hotel-keeper; "but you must pay for dinner, supper, lodging, and breakfast. I have made provision according to order, and I must be paid for it."

"At what hours can we have our meals?" asked Turner.

"Whenever you please," was the reply.

"Very well, sir. We will have dinner at twelve o'clock, and supper at half-past twelve. We will lodge at one o'clock this afternoon, and breakfast at half-past one," said Turner.

The landlord was amazed alike by the fact and manner of this announcement. "You don't want three meals at once, do you?" said he.

"No," said Turner, "nor will we have three at once. You shall set the table and cook us a good dinner. We will eat it. The table shall then be nicely cleared off and reset with clean dishes, and our supper shall be placed upon it. We will eat that, and finish it by one o'clock. Then we will go to bed; and do you see that the supper-table is cleared off, and a good breakfast cooked, with plenty of good coffee, and let it be all ready when we arise at half-past one o'clock. And, mind you, don't think you can re-hash one meal and make it answer for another. We won't stand that. We pay for the best, and we will have the best."

The landlord said it was all right, and started to prepare the dinner. I followed him, and tried again to effect a compromise, but he would hear to nothing of the kind.

A good dinner was on the table at twelve o'clock. We did full justice to it, and Turner then ordered the table to be cleared off and supper brought in at once. It was done punctually by half-past twelve o'clock, and we all did our best towards eating it. By one o'clock we had devoured as much as we possibly could. "Now show us to bed," said Turner, each man by his demand being provided with a lighted candle! The landlord showed us our rooms, and we all (thirty-six in number) undressed and tumbled into bed, previously to which, however, Old Turner hallooed to the landlord from the top of the stairs, "Do you see, sir, that our breakfast is all ready and on the table smoking hot in half an hour."

No response was heard to this request. Turner maintained his gravity, and so did the landlord. Both were angry and made a serious time of it, but for myself, I was convulsed with laugh-

AN OPPORTUNITY

ter at the absurdity of the whole thing. All the company indeed were in great glee, but we felt that the tavern-keeper was unreasonable, and therefore we not only obeyed the orders of Turner, but did our best to get the worth of our money. We were up and dressed in half an hour, but our beds exhibited every appearance of having been devoted to at least one night's lodging.

We then all marched down to breakfast. Every thing was cooked and prepared in the best order, and a stranger would have thought, had he seen the victuals disappear, that we had been on short allowance for a fortnight. It has ever been a mystery to me how we managed to live through such a stuffing as we all underwent on that occasion. I have seen my father *cram* turkeys for weeks preparatory to serving them for a Thanksgiving dinner, but that was not a "circumstance" to the *crammed circus company*.

From this place we proceeded to Richmond, where we remained several days. Turner told the Avery joke to all with whom he became acquainted, and I was determined to discharge the obligation, if possible. An opportunity here occurred, and I hastened to embrace it.

One night, after the performances were over, a dozen or more jovial fellows, with Old Turner and myself, were enjoying ourselves in the sitting room of the hotel, over a few bottles of wine and a box of prime Havanas. Stories were told, songs sung, etc. Finally one man proposed several difficult and funny arithmetical questions, which were soon solved by the company. Old Turner, who liked to be "at home" in every thing, named a circumstance which he said had bothered some good scholars.

"A stranger," says he, "went into a boot-maker's store and priced a pair of boots. They were five dollars. He took a pair and handed the owner a fifty-dollar bill. The boot-man could not change it, but took it to a neighbor and received ten five-dollar notes in change. He returned and gave the stranger \$45, and a pair of boots. The stranger went out and was never seen again. In a few hours after he left, the boot-maker's neighbor

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brought in the \$50; it was a counterfeit. The boot-maker was obliged to borrow the amount of another neighbor in order to redeem the bill with good money; now, the question is, how much did he lose by the whole operation?"

Simple as this case was, numerous answers were returned. Some said he lost \$95 and the boots — others said \$50 and the boots, etc. A correct answer was soon returned, however.

Hoping to catch Turner with a trick, I got behind him, and winking to the rest of the company, and pointing at him, I gravely proposed the following question:

"Suppose," said I, "a man is thirty years of age and he has a child one year of age, he is *thirty times* older than his child. When the child is thirty years old, the father, being sixty, is only *twice* as old as his child. When the child is sixty the father is ninety, and therefore only *one third* older than the child. When the child is ninety the father is one hundred and twenty, and therefore only *one fourth* older than the child. Thus you see, gentlemen, the child is gradually but *surely gaining* on the parent, and as he must certainly continue to come nearer and nearer, in time he must overtake him. The question therefore is, suppose it was possible for them to live long enough, how old would the father be when the child overtook him and became of the same age?"

All the company, except Turner, saw the joke, and perceiving that I intended it for him, they gravely commenced figuring. Presently one of them remarked that it would take too long to figure it out then, though it was plain that such an event would occur if the parties lived long enough.

"I think," I replied, "it is 999 years, but I have almost forgotten, as it is some years since I figured it out."

Turner was much interested in the question. Said he, "I never heard that before, and I would not have believed it; but it is plain that it is so, for the son is gradually gaining on the father, and although I don't know much about arithmetic, one thing is certain, if you give a slow horse five miles or fifty

A SIMPLE STONE

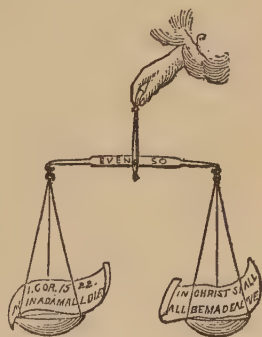
miles the start, and a faster horse is put behind him, I am sure *he must catch the slow one in time if they run far enough!*"

As he appeared to be now convinced beyond doubt, an old gentleman gravely remarked that he knew nothing about figures, but that the idea of a son becoming as old as his father while both were living was nonsense; and he would bet a dozen of champagne that the thing was impossible. Turner, who was a betting man, especially when he felt sure of winning, remarked that it appeared odd, but for reasons just stated it *must* be true, and he therefore took the bet. When the wager was fairly concluded, and judges appointed, the company all burst into laughter, and after much talk, Turner became convinced that although relatively the boy would gain on his father, there must always be thirty years difference between them. Turner paid the champagne, which cost him \$25, and it was several months before I could convince him there was any fun in the joke. He acknowledged it at last, however, and we agreed to call the champagne bet a fair offset to the Avery hoax.

One of our musicians, named Butterfield, died at Richmond. The duty of communicating the intelligence to his wife, who resided in Danbury, Ct., devolved upon me. I inclosed her a lock of his hair, and discharged the painful office as delicately as I could. Our company made up a subscription of \$60 to defray the funeral expenses and erect a simple stone to his memory, with the accompanying design and inscription.

Mr. Turner was deputed to order the stone and see it erected, but I fear that he never did so. He undoubtedly intended to do it, and perhaps he did, but he was apt to neglect, and finally to defer altogether, most things which were not immediately connected with his business.

From Richmond we proceeded to Petersburg, thence to Warrenton, N. C., where, on the 30th October (my engage-



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ment with Turner having expired, with a clear profit to myself of twelve hundred dollars), I parted with the circus company, and taking Vivalla and a negro singer and dancer named James Sandford,⁴ with several musicians, horses, wagons, and a small canvas tent, started off with an exhibition on my own account, intending to travel as far south as Montgomery, Ala. Early in the morning my little company started. I remained behind for half an hour, receiving and reciprocating the kindly wishes of my late companions, and Mr. Turner then conveyed me in his carriage to overtake my own troupe. We rode slowly, because reluctant to part, and twenty miles of road was beguiled by pleasing conversation before we overtook those who had preceded us. My old friend wished me great success, and returned to his circus company. I felt lonely for several days, but my mind was so occupied by business, that I soon became reconciled to my new position.

On Saturday, November 12, 1836, we halted in a settlement known as Rocky Mount Falls, N. C., and I attended the Baptist church on the following Sabbath morning. In going thither from the tavern, I noticed a rostrum and benches in a grove near by, and I said to the landlord (who accompanied me), "This is a very pleasant day, and I should like to speak to the people from that stand."

The suggestion pleased him. He was sure, he said, that the congregation, most of whom came a long distance to attend one service on the Sabbath, would be glad to hear a stranger.

Before the conclusion of morning worship, I requested the venerable clergyman to announce that I would speak to the people, after dismissal, for half an hour in the grove. He inquired if I was a clergyman, and when I replied in the negative, he expressed a fear that he should give offence by complying with my request, but he had no objection that *I* should make the announcement — which I accordingly did. The congrega-

⁴ "Sanford" in "Struggles and Triumphs" (1869). [Ed.]

IN THE PREACHER'S STAND

tion, numbering about three hundred, promptly repaired to the grove, and I took my position in the preacher's stand.

I began by informing the people that I was not a clergyman, and had little experience in public speaking; but I felt a deep interest in the subject of religion and morality, and would attempt, in a plain way, to set before them the duties and privileges of man. "The pleasures of sin for a season," which Moses might have enjoyed in the palaces of Egypt, I compared with "the recompense of reward" which he had respect to, in obeying the commands of God; and I appealed to every man's experience, observation, and reason, to confirm the Bible doctrine of wretchedness in vice and happiness in virtue. We cannot violate the laws of God with impunity, and he will not keep back the wages of well-doing. The outside show of things is of very small account. We must look to realities and not to appearances. "Diamonds may glitter on a vicious breast" but "the soul's calm sunshine and the heart-felt joy is virtue's prize." The rogue, the man of rough passions, the drunkard, are not to be envied even at the best, and a conscience hardened in sin is the most sorrowful thing that we can think of. Such an one may enjoy life as a beast enjoys it — perhaps like a beast shut up in a cage or a dungeon, with enough to eat and to drink; but the soul cannot be satisfied or happy without devotion toward God and good-will toward man.

I went on in this strain, with much Scripture and many familiar illustrations, for about three quarters of an hour. When I had finished my speech, several gentlemen shook me by the hand, expressed themselves pleased, begged to know my name, which they wrote down. I had no very high opinion of my performance, but I felt happy in believing that I possibly had done some good in that charming grove on that beautiful Sabbath.

In Raleigh, N. C., I sold one half of my exhibition to a man whom I will here call Henry. He may be a better man *now* than he was then, and I therefore conceal his real name. He had kept along with us during the preceding week, with a

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wagon-load of ready-made clothing for sale, and finally bought the half-interest above named.

At Camden, S. C., Sandford abruptly left me. I had advertised negro songs; no one of my company was competent to fill his place; but being determined not to disappoint the audience, *I blacked myself thoroughly*, and sung the songs advertised, namely, "Zip Coon," "Gittin' Up-stairs," and "The Raccoon Hunt, or Sitting on a Rail." It was decidedly "a hard push," but the audience supposed the singer was Sandford, and, to my surprise, my singing was applauded, and in two of the songs I was encored!

One of my musicians, a Scotchman named Cochran, was arrested in Camden, for having said to the colored barber who was shaving him, that he ought to escape to the Free States or Canada. I made strong but vain efforts for his release. He was imprisoned over six months.

After singing my negro songs one evening, and just as I had pulled my coat off in the "dressing-room" of the tent, I heard a slight disturbance outside the canvas. Rushing to the spot, and finding a person disputing with my men, I took their part, and spoke my mind to him very freely. He instantly drew his pistol, exclaiming, "You black scoundrel! dare you use such language to a white man?" and proceeded deliberately to cock it. I saw that he supposed me to be a negro, and might perhaps blow my brains out. Quick as thought I rolled up my shirt sleeves, and replied, "I am as white as *you* are, sir." He absolutely dropped the pistol with fright! Probably he had never seen a white man blacked up before; at all events, he begged my pardon, and I re-entered my dressing-room, fully realizing that I had incurred a narrow chance of losing my life. Nothing but a presence of mind which never yet deserted me, saved my brains. On four several occasions during my life have I had a loaded pistol pointed at my head, and on each occasion have I escaped by little less than a miracle. Several times, also, have I been in deadly peril by accidents; and now, when I look over my history, and call these things to mind, and especially when,

A REPORT CURRENT

in tracing my career, I find that so many with whom I have had intercourse are tenants of the grave, I cannot but realize that I am deeply indebted to the mercy of God. I may as well add, as one of the sections of my reflective moods, that when I consider the kinds of company into which for a number of years I was thrown, the associations with which I was connected, and the strong temptations to wrong-doing and bad habits which lay in my path, I am astonished as well as grateful that I was not utterly ruined. I honestly believe that, under God, I owe my preservation from the woe of living and dying a loafer and a vagabond, to the single fact, that I was never fond of strong drink. True, I have in my time drank liquor, and have even been intoxicated, but generally I wholly abstained from the use of intoxicating beverages, and am happy to say, that for a number of years past, I have been strictly "a teetotaller."

During my absence from home, I usually wrote twice a week to my family, and nearly as often received letters from my wife. I received one from her, while in Columbia, S. C., stating it as a report current in Connecticut that I was in prison in Canada, on a charge of murder, had received my trial, and was under sentence of death! The story, I believe, originated in the fact that a circus company in Canada had gotten into difficulty with some rowdies who assaulted them. It certainly was not Turner's, for we met it in Columbia, S. C., December 5, 1836. It was shortly to be disbanded. I bought four horses and two wagons belonging to his side show, and hired Joe Pentland and Robert White to join my company. Pentland, besides being a celebrated clown, is a capital ventriloquist, balancer, comic singer, and performer of legerdemain. White was a negro-singer. This relieved me from the negro-song line, and made my exhibition (of which Henry was half owner) quite attractive. I called it "Barnum's Grand Scientific and Musical Theatre."

Henry acted as treasurer, and I received the tickets at the door. While doing this, at Augusta, Ga., a man attempted to

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pass. I demanded a ticket. He demurred, and upon inquiring why, he said he was a sheriff. I told him that I knew no particular reason why a sheriff should not pay as well as anybody else, to which he replied, "You had better ask Mr. Henry about that." This startled me, so I passed him in, and hastened to ask Henry what was the matter. He reluctantly informed me that the sheriff had served a writ on him for a debt of \$500. Henry had \$600 of the company's money in his possession, and I saw that management would be required to prevent "sequestration of the funds." Privately hastening to a lawyer, I procured a bill of sale of all the property of the exhibition, lacking only Henry's signature, and returned to the theatre, where the performances were still in progress. The lawyer of Henry's creditor, and the creditor himself, awaited me. They demanded the keys of the stable, so as to "levy" on the horses and carriages. I declined compliance, whereupon they threatened to break down the doors and seize the property. I begged them to wait a few moments until I could consult with Henry, — and they consented. Henry desired to cheat his creditor, and immediately signed the bill of sale. Lest the sheriff should search him, he handed me \$90, stating that he had \$500 locked up in a safe place where the sheriff could not find it. Leaving him in the ticket office, I returned to the sheriff and the creditor, and informed them that Henry refused to compromise or to pay the claim. "Then give me the keys," said the sheriff. I declined doing so and he again threatened to break down the stable doors. "Why will you do this?" said I.

"To attach the horses and carriages," he replied.

"Why do you wish to levy on them?"

"To secure a debt that Mr. Henry owes, and I wish to attach his interest in the property."

"You have not yet levied on the horses and carriages," I said.

"No, I have not, but I *will* within ten minutes," replied the sheriff.

"Not exactly," said I — at the same time handing the bill

“LUCKY STARS”

of sale to my friend, Jackson O. Brown, with a request to read it. He did so. “Now, gentlemen,” said I, addressing the sheriff and creditor, “you see that I am in full possession of the property as entire owner. You confess you have not yet levied on it, and if you touch my property, you do it at your peril.”

I do not remember ever having seen two persons look more surprised than did these gentlemen, when they discovered they had been the victims of a “Yankee trick.”

The sheriff immediately seized Henry and took him to prison. It was Saturday night, December 17. I privately told Henry to keep up courage; that it was too late to find bail that night, but I would call on him in the morning.

The next morning I learned from unquestionable authority that Henry owed his creditor \$1300; that he agreed, so soon as the Saturday evening performance closed, to hand over \$500 in cash (belonging to the company) and a bill of sale of his interest in the horses, carriages, and exhibition; and that, as a consideration, one of the horses should be “ready saddled and bridled” for Henry to decamp, leaving me in the lurch! This conspiracy happened to be defeated by the single fact (succeeded by a little management) that the sheriff sought to pass me at the door of the theatre as “a dead-head.”

Under the circumstances, I could have little sympathy for Henry, and I now desired to secure the \$500 which he had secreted. Vivalla obtained it from him to keep it from the sheriff, and I obtained it from Vivalla on Henry’s order, as a means of procuring the required bail on Monday morning. I then paid the creditor the full amount received from Henry as the price of his half-interest in the establishment — received in exchange a guaranty that I should never be troubled by my quondam partner on that score, also an assignment of \$500 of the creditor’s claim; and thus my “lucky stars” relieved me from one of the most difficult positions of my life.

While travelling with our teams and show through a desolate part of Georgia, our advertiser, who was in advance of

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the party, finding the route, on one occasion, too long for us to reach a town at night, arranged with a poor widow woman named Hayes to furnish us with meals and let us lodge in her hut and out-houses. It was a beggarly place, belonging to one of the poorest of "poor whites." Our horses were to stand out all night, and a farmer, six miles distant, was to bring a load of provender on the day of our arrival. Bills were then posted announcing a performance under a canvas tent near Widow Hayes', for, as a show was a rarity in that region, it was conjectured that a hundred or more small farmers and "poor whites" might be assembled and that the receipts would cover the expenses.

Meanwhile, our advertiser, who was quite a wag, wrote back informing us of the difficulties of reaching a town on that part of our route and stating that he had made arrangements for us to stay over night on the plantation of "Lady Hayes," and that although the country was sparsely settled, we could doubtless give a profitable performance to a fair audience.

Anticipating a fine time on this noble "plantation," we started at four o'clock in the morning so as to arrive at one o'clock, thus avoiding the heat of the afternoon. Towards noon we came to a small river where some men, whom we afterwards discovered to be down-east Yankees, from Maine, were repairing a bridge. Every flooring plank had been taken up and it was impossible for our teams to cross. "Could the bridge be fixed so that we could go over?" I inquired. "No; it would take half a day, and mean time if we must cross, there was a place about sixteen miles down the river where we could get over." "But we can't go so far as that; we are under engagement to perform on Lady Hayes' place to-night and we must cross here. Fix the bridge and we will pay you handsomely."

They wanted no money, but if we would give them some tickets to our show they thought they might do something for us. I gladly consented and in fifteen minutes we crossed that bridge. The cunning rascals had seen our posters and knew we were coming; so they had taken up the planks of the bridge and

LADY HAYES

had hidden them till they had levied upon us for tickets, when the floor was re-laid in a quarter of an hour. We laughed heartily at the trick and were very glad to cross so cheaply.

Towards dinner time, we began to look out for the grand mansion of "Lady Hayes," and seeing nothing but little huts we quietly pursued our journey. At one o'clock — the time when we should have arrived at our destination — I became impatient and riding up to a poverty-stricken hovel and seeing a ragged, barefooted old woman, with her sleeves rolled up to her shoulders, who was washing clothes in front of the door, I inquired —

"Hallo! can you tell me where Lady Hayes lives?"

The old woman raised her head, which was covered with tangled locks and matted hair, and exclaimed —

"Hey?"

"No, Hayes, Lady Hayes; where is her plantation?"

"This is the place," she answered. "I'm Widder Hayes and you are all to stay here to-night."

We could not believe our ears or eyes; but after putting the dirty old woman through a severe cross-examination she finally produced a contract, signed by our advertiser, agreeing for board and lodging for the company and we found ourselves booked for the night. It appeared that our advertiser could find no better quarters in that forlorn section and he had indulged in a joke at our expense by exciting our appetites and imaginations in anticipation of the luxuries we should find in the magnificent mansion of "Lady Hayes."

Joe Pentland grumbled, Bob White indulged in some very strong language, and Signor Vivalla laughed. He had travelled with his monkey and organ in Italy and could put up with any fare that offered. I took the disappointment philosophically, simply remarking that we must make the best of it and compensate ourselves when we reached a town next day.

When the old woman called us to dinner we crept into her hut and found that she had improvised benches at her table by placing boards upon the only four chairs in her possession,

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and at that, some of us were obliged to stand. The dinner consisted of a piece of smoked boiled bacon, a large dish of "greens," and corn bread. Three plates, two knives, and three forks made up the entire table furniture and compelled a resort to our jack-knives. "A short horse is soon curried," and dinner was speedily despatched. It did not seem possible for an audience to assemble in that forsaken quarter, and we concluded not to take the canvas tent out of the wagon.

By three o'clock, however, at least fifty persons had arrived on the ground to attend the night show and they reported "more a-coming." Accordingly we put up the tent and arranged our small stage and curtains, preparing seats for two hundred people. Those who had already arrived were mostly women, many of them from sixteen to twenty years old — poor, thin, sallow-faced creatures, wretchedly clad, some of them engaged in smoking pipes, while the rest were chewing snuff. This latter process was new to me; each chewer was provided with a short stick, softened at one end, by chewing it, and this stick was occasionally dipped into a snuff box and then stuck into the mouth, from whence it protruded like a cigar. The technical term for the proceeding is "snuff-dipping." Before night, stragglers had brought the number of people on Lady Hayes' plantation up to one hundred, and soon after dark, we opened our exhibition to an audience of about two hundred. The men were a pale, haggard set of uncombed, uncouth creatures, whose constantly-moving jaws and the streams of colored saliva exuding from the corners of their mouths indicated that they were confirmed tobacco chewers. I never saw a more stupid and brutish assemblage of human beings. The performance delighted them; Pentland's sleight-of-hand tricks astonished them and led them to declare that he must be in league with the evil one; Signor Vivalla's ball-tossing and plate-spinning elicited their loudest applause; and Bob White's negro songs and breakdowns made them fairly scream with laughter.

At last, the performance terminated and Pentland stepped

THEY SAT

forward and delivered the closing address, which he had repeated, word for word, a hundred times, and which was precisely as follows:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: The entertainments of the evening have now come to a conclusion, and, we hope, to your general satisfaction."

But now came a dilemma: the meaning of this announcement was quite above the comprehension of the audience; they had not the remotest idea that the performance was finished, and they sat like statues.

With a hearty laugh at Pentland, I told him that his language was not understood in this locality and that he must try again. He was chagrined, and declared that he would not say another word. Little Vivalla laughed, danced around like a monkey, and said, in his broken English:

"Ah, ha! Signor Pentland; you no speak good Eenglish, hah! These educated people no understood you, eh? By gar, what d——d fools! Ah, Signor Barnum, let me speaks to them; I will make them jump double queek."

I quite enjoyed the fun and said, "Well, signor, go ahead."

The little Italian jumped upon the stage and with a broad grimace and tremendous gesture exclaimed —

"Eet is feenish!"

He then retired behind the curtain, but, of course, the audience did not understand that he had told them the performance was finished. No one would have understood him. Hence, the spectators sat still, wondering what would come next. "By gar," said Vivalla, losing his temper, "I will give them a hint," and he loosened the cord and down fell the curtain on one side of the stage.

"Good, good," cried out an enthusiastic "poor white," giving his quid a fresh roll to the other side of his mouth, "now we are going to have something new."

"I reckon they's totin' that plunder off to get ready for a dance," said a delicate "dipper," making a lunge into her box for another mouthful of the dust.

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Things were becoming serious, and I saw that in order to get rid of these people they must be addressed in plain language; so, walking upon the stage, I simply said, making at the same time a motion for them to go —

“It is all over; no more performance; the show is out.”

This was understood, but they still stood upon the order of their going and were loth to leave, especially as the, to them, extraordinary announcements of Pentland and Vivalla had prepared them for something fresh. Several days before, our band of musicians had left us, reducing our orchestra to an organ and pipes, ground and blown by an Italian whom we had picked up on the road. We had, in addition, a large bass drum, with no one to beat it, and this drum was espied by some of the audience in going out. Very soon I was waited upon by a masculine committee of three, who informed me that “the young ladies were very anxious to hear a tune on the big drum.” Pentland heard the request and replied, “I will accommodate the young ladies,” and strapping on the drum he took a stick in each hand and began to pound tremendously. Occasionally he would rap the sticks together, toss one of them into the air, catching it as it came down, and then pound away again like mad. In fact, he cut up all sorts of pranks with that big drum and when he was tired out and stopped, he was gratified at being told by the “young ladies” that they had never heard a big drum before, but he “played it splendid” and they thought it was altogether the best part of the entire performance!

The next forenoon we arrived at Macon, and congratulated ourselves that we had again reached the regions of civilization.

My diary, from which the preceding and much else has here been condensed, contains many incidents which I shall omit. I cannot, however, pass an adventure of mine as Pentland’s confederate in several tricks of legerdemain.

His table had the usual trap-door for passing things to his assistant, preparatory to the magical transformations presented to the spectators. The quarters below were painfully narrow

A SQUIRREL AND A WATCH

for a man of my size, but I volunteered for the occasion in the absence of the diminutive employee in that line of business. Squeezing into the allotted space, I found that my nose and my knees were likely to become acquainted by close contact—nevertheless, though heartily wishing myself out of the scrape, I held a live squirrel in my hand, ready to wind the chain of a watch around his neck and hand him up through the trap-door when needed.

Pentland's arrangements of vases, cups, balls, and divers other accompaniments of legerdemain, were on the table. In due time, he called for a watch with a gold chain. One of the spectators favored him with the article, and it was soon passed into my possession, under a vase and through the little trap-door in the top of the table. Awkwardly performing my part, the squirrel bit me severely; I shrieked with pain, straightened my neck first, then my back, then my legs, overthrew the table, smashed every breakable article upon it, and rushed behind the curtain! The squirrel galloped off with the watch around his neck. Pentland was struck speechless, but if ever there was hooting and shouting in a mass of spectators, it was heard that night.

In passing from Columbus, Georgia, to Montgomery, Alabama, we were obliged to travel eighty miles through a very thinly settled and desolate portion of country known as the "Indian Nation." At this time our government was gathering in the Indians, and lodging them in encampments at various posts under a strong guard, preparatory for their migration to Arkansas.⁵ The chief portion of the Indians came in voluntarily, and were willing to be removed to their new home; but there was a good number of "hostiles" who would not come in, but who infested the swamps near the road leading from Columbus to Montgomery, and who almost daily murdered passengers who had occasion to pass through the "Indian Na-

⁵ These were Cherokees, who, in accordance with the treaty of 1835, sold their lands, and the main body of whom went to Indian Territory, which had been set apart in 1834 for Indians removed from their old homes. [Ed.]

tion." Many considered it hazardous to pass over the road without a strong escort. The day previous to our starting, the mail stage had been stopped, the passengers all murdered, and the stage burned, the driver escaping almost by a miracle. It was with much trepidation that we determined upon incurring the risk. Our chief hope was, that owing to the large number composing our company, and the Indians being scattered in small bands, our appearance would be too formidable for them to risk an attack. We all armed ourselves with guns, pistols, bowie-knives, etc., and started on our journey.

None of us felt ashamed to acknowledge that we dreaded to incur the risk, except Vivalla. He was probably the greatest coward amongst us, but like most of that class when they feel pretty *safe*, he swaggered and strutted about with much apparent importance, laughing at us for our fears, and swearing that he was afraid of nothing, but if he met fifty Indians he should give them one devil of a licking, and "send dem back to de swamp in no time." The cowardly little braggadocio vexed us much, and we determined if we ever got through to put his courage to the test.

The first day we travelled thirty miles without seeing any Indians, and before night came to a halt at the house of a cotton planter, who kept us safe till morning. The next day we proceeded safely to Tuskeega,⁶ a small village where there was an encampment of fifteen hundred Indians, including squaws and children. The third day we arrived at Mount Meigs, where there was another "Indian camp" containing twenty-five hundred of the red skins. We were now within fourteen miles of Montgomery, and felt out of all danger. But being determined to play a trick upon the courageous Vivalla, we informed him the next morning that we had to pass over the most dangerous portion of the road, as it was said to be infested with desperate hostile warriors. Vivalla, as usual, was all courage; saying, "he only hoped he should see some of de copper-colored

⁶ Tuskegee, capital of Macon county, now known as the seat of the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. [Ed.]

rascals: how he would make dem run." When we had travelled about six miles, and had come to a dismal-looking, thickly wooded place, a large fox squirrel crossed the road, and ran into the adjoining woods. Vivalla proposed pursuing it. This was just what we wanted; so giving a hint to several who were in the secret, we halted, and they went with Vivalla in pursuit of the squirrel. In the mean time Pentland slipped on an old Indian dress with a fringed hunting shirt and moccasins, which we had secretly purchased at Mount Meigs, and coloring his face with Spanish brown, which we had obtained for the purpose, and mounting his head with a cap of colored feathers, he shouldered a musket and followed the track of Vivalla and his party, looking as much like a real Indian as any we had seen the day previous in the camp. When he had got near them, he approached stealthily, and was not discovered till he leaped in their very midst, and uttered a tremendous "whoop."

Vivalla's companions, who were all in the joke, instantly fled in the direction of the wagons, and Vivalla himself, half frightened to death, exhibited great swiftness of foot in his endeavors to take the same route, but the artificial Indian betrayed extreme partiality and malignity in allowing all the others to escape, and devoting his whole attention to "heading" the Italian. The poor little fellow yelled like a wild man, when he saw the musket of the Indian pointed towards him, and found there was no possible means of escape, except by running in the direction opposite to where we were waiting. He ran like a deer, jumping over fallen trees and stumps with remarkable quickness, not daring to look behind him. Pentland, who was the most nimble on foot, allowed the Italian to keep about four rods ahead, while he followed, gun in hand, uttering a horrible Indian yell at every other step. The race continued nearly a mile, when the Signor, completely out of breath, perceiving his red-skin adversary was fast gaining on him, stopped, and throwing himself on his knees begged for life. The Indian, pretending not to understand English, levelled his gun at Vivalla's

head, but the poor fellow writhed and screeched like a panther; and carrying on a pantomime, gave the Indian to understand that life was all he asked, and if that was spared every thing he possessed was at the service of his foe. The savage appeared to relent, and to understand the signs made by the Italian. He took his musket by the muzzle and rested the breech upon the ground, at the same time motioning to his trembling victim to "shell out."

Quick as thought, Vivalla turned his pockets inside out, and the Indian seized his purse containing eleven dollars. This was all the money he had about him, the rest being deposited in a trunk in one of our wagons. Gloves, handkerchiefs, knives, etc., were next offered up to appease the wrath of the savage; but he looked upon the offerings with disdain. Then motioning the Italian to rise from his knees the poor fellow got up, and was led by his conqueror like a lamb to the slaughter. The savage marched him to a large and stately oak, where he proceeded, with the aid of a handkerchief, to tie his arms in the most scientific and Indian-like manner around the trunk of the tree.

The red-skinned warrior then departed, leaving poor Vivalla more dead than alive. Pentland hastened to join us, and doffing his wampum dress and washing his face, we all proceeded in quest of the Italian. We found the little fellow tied to the tree, nearly dead with fright, but when he saw us his joy knew no bounds. We loosened his hands, and he jumped and laughed, and chattered like a monkey. His courage returned instantly, and he swore that after his companions left him, the Indian was joined by half a dozen others; that if he had kept his gun he should have shot one and beat out the brains of the other six, but being unarmed, he was obliged to surrender. We pretended to believe his story, and allowed him to repeat and brag over his adventures for a week afterwards, at which time we told him the joke. Chagrin and mortification sat on every line of his countenance, but he soon rallied and swore that it was all "one great lie." Pentland offered him his eleven dollars, but he would not touch it, for he "swore like a trooper" that it could

THE EGG BAG TRICK

not be his, for seven Indians took his money from him. Many a hearty laugh did we have over the valor of the little Italian, but we were at last obliged to drop the subject altogether, for the mere allusion to it made him so angry and surly that we could not get a pleasant word out of him for a week afterwards. But from that time we never heard the Signor boast of his courage, or make any threats against a foe, real or imaginary.

We reached Montgomery, Ala., February 28th, 1837. Here we met a legerdemain performer by the name of Henry Hawley. He was about forty-five years of age, but being prematurely gray, he had the appearance of a venerable gentleman of seventy. He purchased one half of my exhibition.

Hawley had much ready wit — a happy way of localizing most of his tricks — was very popular in that part of the country, where he had been performing for several years — and I never saw him “nonplussed” but once. It was in the performance of the trick called “The Egg Bag and the Old Hen.” It is done in the following manner:

The exhibitor has a bag in which he declares there is an old hen, that will lay as many eggs as he pleases. He turns the bag inside out. There is apparently nothing in it; but actually, between the outside of the bag and the lining, is a small pocket so contrived with divisions as to hold six eggs. Having convinced the audience that there is nothing in the bag, he commands the hen to lay, and produces an egg. This he does, showing the inside and outside of the bag, each time, until all are gone but one. Keeping his hand on that part of the bag which covers the last egg, he puts the rest of the bag on the ground, and stamps upon it, to show that there is no deception; then, stating that he can have as many more eggs as he pleases, pulls out the last. “Before I take any more out” he says, “I will satisfy you that the eggs are real.” At this time he stands in front of his table, and while breaking upon a plate an egg which he holds in his right hand, the empty bag is in his left hand. All eyes are turned upon the egg to see whether it is genuine or

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not. While the exhibitor thus distracts the attention of the audience, he slyly passes his left hand to the back of the table, and hangs his empty bag on a hook which is placed there. At the same instant he detaches from another hook, behind the table, a bag exactly similar to the one which held the eggs, but which bag contains a hen.

"Now," says the exhibitor, "having seen that the eggs are real, I will show you the old hen that laid them." Dropping the mouth of the bag upon the ground, he turns out the old hen, to the astonishment of the audience.

On the occasion to which I allude, we did not reach the town where we were to exhibit until two o'clock in the afternoon. We had advertised a performance for three o'clock, and the village was already swarming with country people who came "to see the show." We put up the canvas as soon as possible. Hawley arranged his table, and not having time to prepare his "old hen" trick, he handed the bag to a negro boy attached to the tavern where we stopped, told him to catch an old hen, and put her into the bag, and he should "see the show for nothing." The darkey soon returned, handed the bag to Hawley, and passed in.

The old hen was duly hung up at the back of the table, our fiddler played a tune (we had but one musician yet), the curtain rose, and old Hawley opened the performances. He first exhibited several dexterous tricks with cups and balls — swallowed apparently a pound of tow — blew fire from his mouth, and then drew many yards of various-colored ribbons from the same receptacle. These were followed by wonderful tricks with iron rings, strings, and keys; he apparently swallowed a watch, and pulled an unknown quantity of cabbages, turnips, and onions from the bosom of a verdant young countryman who volunteered to "assist" at the performances.

Hawley then commenced the great trick of the day, producing egg after egg as if by magic. The audience applauded him to the echo. He felt they were with him, and with triumphant exultation he exclaimed, "And now I will show you the old hen

CREDULOUS PERSONS

that laid all the eggs." He emptied the bag, and a bird appeared — but, alas, it was a *rooster*! Every one was thunder-struck at the phenomenon, but when the old cock, who was very indignant at his confinement, strutted across the stage, shook his ruffled feathers, and began to crow, as if in defiance — the whole audience burst into a shriek of laughter, and Hawley, confounded and abashed, bolted into the dressing-room, cursed the stupidity of the black "fowl-fancier," and threatened to break the rascal's head, at the same time declaring he would not again appear in front of the curtain. Nor did he. He might have turned the accident to good account, and he probably would have done so nine times out of ten, but the thing was so totally unexpected, and the audience had so fair a start in merriment before he could recover self-possession, that he was literally obliged to quit the field.

After the performances, in country places, Hawley usually sat in the village bar-room, and a knot of astonished and credulous persons would gather about him. They were also attracted by the marvellous stories in which he indulged. His gray head, grave countenance, and serious manner, carried conviction in the more probable narratives — the barely possible were swallowed, though with occasional signs of choking — but when he enlarged in his Munchausen vein, some of his auditors would forget his venerable presence, and cry out, "That's a lie, by thunder!" Hawley would laugh heartily and reply, "It is as true as any thing I have yet told you."

He had a singularly lively imagination, and his inventive faculty regarded neither rhyme nor reason. Had he lived in the times of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, he would have been celebrated, as I think a few specimens of his bar-room stories will show.

"Gentlemen, you have doubtless heard that 'truth is strange, stranger than fiction.' There never was a truer saying. When Bruce, the great African traveller, returned to England and stated that some of the filthy black tribes there cut steaks out of cattle while alive, he was called a liar. Catlin tells us that

an Indian who came to one of our seaports, on his return to his own tribe was killed. His crime was telling the truth; but so impossible did his account of ships appear to them, that they said, 'Our brother lies,' and then did his business, and took his scalp. I mention these facts, because some of my own experiences are stranger than any thing you perhaps have ever heard. Without this preface you might not believe me."

"Oh, we should not think of doubting your word," said they.

"Gentlemen, has either of you ever visited the Rocky Mountains?" asked Hawley, as he glanced around at his auditors. They replied in the negative.

"I have been there frequently," he continued, "and am acquainted with many singular facts concerning that region. There is one locality where all the American hunters and trappers in that vicinity meet every Fourth of July to celebrate 'Independence.' I am happy to say that they make excellent ice-punch, the ice being obtained from a huge cavern in the neighborhood, where it is found in large quantities, at all seasons. On one occasion, we all drank so freely as to use up a cart-load of ice, and we sent a couple of Irishmen for a second load.

"They soon returned in sore affright. In digging the ice, they came upon a pair of boots with real legs in them, and they dared proceed no further. A party of us went down to the cave, assisted in removing the ice, which had probably not been disturbed for fifty years, and succeeded in exhuming a man. The corpse looked as fresh as if it had been alive. It was habited in an antique dress — short breeches and knee-buckles, a queer old-fashioned coat and cocked hat. We placed the body upon the cart and took it to our place of rendezvous. It looked so fresh and life-like, that several of the old trappers insisted it was merely in a dormant state and could be restored to animation by using the proper means. This seemed to me ridiculous, but they prepared a large kettle of warm water, in which they placed the body, after stripping off the clothing, and then proceeded to pour hot brandy into the mouth.

“ *WITH DISPATCHES* ”

“ In the course of twenty minutes, you may judge my surprise in seeing the man open his eyes and relax the muscles of his face ! They then placed him in woollen blankets, and commenced rubbing him briskly. In another quarter of an hour he began to speak, and in a very short time he was fully recovered. We dressed him, he joined us in our convivialities, and seemed for an hour to be as happy as any of the party. He then started to his feet, and thanking us for our courtesy, said he must proceed on his journey, and called for his horse.

“ ‘ What horse ? ’

“ ‘ The horse I rode last night.’

“ None could answer.

“ ‘ Gentlemen, do not detain me, I beg of you,’ he exclaimed. ‘ My business is of the utmost importance. Provide me with a horse, and I will pay you well. You see that I have money.’ With this he pulled out a bag or purse, which was stocked with guineas, coined in the reign of George the Third. There was a mystery about the whole affair that we could not fathom, and our curiosity was as great as the stranger’s impatience.

“ ‘ If you will tell us where you are going, we will,’ we said.

“ ‘ On your promise not to detain me, I will.’

“ We promised.

“ ‘ I am going to the army with dispatches from the government.’

“ ‘ Oh ! ’ we said, wondering at the strangeness of the man’s attire, ‘ you are going to Florida then ? ’

“ ‘ No, to ——.’

“ ‘ Why, friend, there’s no army there ; and what makes you wear such a queer old-fashioned dress ? ’

“ At this, for the first time, he appeared to regard our attire, and looked no less astonished than we really were.

“ ‘ Who and what are you ? ’ we exclaimed, our curiosity becoming insupportable.

“ ‘ I am in your power,’ he said, ‘ I scorn equivocation. Do with me as you will. I am an officer of King George, whom I am proud to serve.’

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"To make a long story short, gentlemen, I will tell you at once, that this officer, as we afterwards learned from his own lips, had been sent on a mission to some Indian tribes during the Revolutionary War, and was returning to the army, when he went into a cave to sleep. It was quite dark, and he fell and became insensible. He knew nothing more until we recovered him."

This story created an immense sensation. The auditors looked at old Hawley, saw that his countenance was as grave as that of a judge, glanced at his gray hair, and they swallowed the soldier, head, boots, and all. Emboldened by his success, Hawley proceeded to relate that there was, in that same section, an area of twenty miles where the air was so pure that people never died, unless by accident.

"Never died!" exclaimed several of his hearers in astonishment.

"No, gentlemen, it was quite impossible. The rare purity of the atmosphere prevented it. When persons got too old to be useful, they would sometimes be blown away, and, once outside of the charmed circle, they were lost."

"Is that really possible?" asked one of his hearers, in some doubt.

"A fact, upon my honor," rejoined old Hawley. "Indeed, some years ago several philanthropic gentlemen erected a museum at that place, where persons who became too old for usefulness were put into sacks, labelled, registered at the office, and hung up. If at any subsequent period their friends wished to converse with them, for a fee of fifty cents the old friend would be taken down, placed in a kettle of tepid water, and would soon be enabled to hold a conversation of half an hour, when he would be taken out, wiped off, and hung up again."

"That *seems* incredible!" remarked one of the listeners.

"Of course it does," replied Hawley. "It is nevertheless true. Why, gentlemen," he continued, "on one occasion I went to the museum, and asked if they had a subject there named Samuel Hawley. I had an uncle by that name who went to the

A MONSTROUS GUN

Rocky Mountains thirty years before, and we had not heard from him in a long time. The clerk, having examined the register, replied that Samuel Hawley was in Sack No. 367, and had been there nineteen years. I paid the fee and called for an interview. The contents of that particular sack were placed in the warm water, and in a short time I proceeded to inform my old uncle who I was. He seemed pleased to see me, although I was a child when he left our part of the country. He inquired about my father and other friends. His voice was very weak, and after a conversation of twenty minutes, he said his breath was failing him, and if I had nothing more to say he would like to be hung up again. I remarked that I believed he formerly owned a large gun, and asked him where it was. He informed me that it was lying on the cross-beam in my father's garret, and that I was welcome to it. I thanked him, and bidding him good-bye, the keeper of the museum took him in hand, and soon placed him in his proper locality. If any of you should ever go that way, gentlemen, I hope you will call on my uncle and present him my compliments. Remember his number is 367."

Several of the auditors marked the number on cards, and put them in their pocket-books! "Did you ever find the gun?" asked one of the listeners, who had swallowed the museum story without a gulp.

"Yes, indeed, I found it just where Uncle Sam said it was. It was a monstrous large gun. It required one pound of powder and four pounds of shot to load it properly. That same season I returned to my father's house, which was in the western part of the State of New York. He had sown a large field of buckwheat, and the wild pigeons visited it every morning about sunrise in such immense quantities that he feared they would destroy it all. Myself and brothers therefore took our turns in watching it at that particular portion of the day. One morning I took the big gun with me. I arrived at the field an hour too early. I therefore loaded my gun, and resting it on the fence with the muzzle pointed towards the field, I propped it up and

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cocked it, so that all should be ready. I then took a seat on a stump to await the coming of the pigeons. I happened to fall asleep, and when I awoke the sun was half an hour high. I looked into our lot and saw that the ground was literally covered with pigeons! I assure you, gentlemen, that you can have no conception of the quantity of pigeons that were devouring our buckwheat. I jumped upon my feet, and, throwing a stick into the field to start them up, placed myself at the gun, prepared to fire at the proper moment. The whole body of pigeons rose exactly together, their shadow absolutely making the ground dark under them. I pulled the trigger of the big gun, and a thundering report followed. Unfortunately I was half a second too late. The birds had risen just above the range of my musket, and I did not kill a pigeon, but I picked up four bushels and a half of feet and legs shot clean off!"

"That's a lie, by thunder!" exclaimed one of the listeners, and the others all agreed with him.

"It is just as true as any thing I have told you to-night," exclaimed Hawley, with a hearty laugh, in which the company joined.

Hawley acquired such a habit of relating his fictitious experiences, that it was difficult to get the truth out of him. I could not name a place in any part of the world that he had not visited. One day I said to him, "Hawley, I think I can name *one* place where you have never been."

"Very likely," he replied; "but where is it?"

"You have never made a balloon ascension," said I.

"There you are very much mistaken," he replied; "for I went up three times with Wise⁷ in 1832 from the city of Louisville. One was the highest ascent he ever made."

⁷ John Wise (1808-1879), American aeronaut. In 1859 Wise flew from St. Louis to Henderson, New York, a distance of 1120 miles; and this remained an unbroken record until 1900, when Comte Henri de la Vaulx flew 1193 miles in Europe. In 1873 the "Daily Graphic" of New York backed Wise in his project of crossing the Atlantic—a project defeated through the collapse of the huge balloon constructed for him. [Ed.]

LEAVING SECURITY

There was no use in disputing him, but I felt confident there was not a word of truth in his story.

Our company performed in numerous places in Alabama, Kentucky, and Tennessee, and disbanded in Nashville, May, 1837. Vivalla went off on his own account, performed a few months in New York, and thence in the fall he sailed to Cuba, where I heard he died the year following. At a later period in my history, however, the little fellow turns up again.

Hawley remained in Tennessee to take charge of our horses, which had been "turned out to grass," and I returned to "home, sweet home," to spend a few weeks with my dear family. Early in July I returned to the West, with a new company of performers, rejoined Hawley, and recommenced operations in Kentucky. We were not successful. One of our few employees was incompetent—one was intemperate—both were dismissed; our negro-singer was drowned in the river at Frankfort. Funds were low—I was obliged to leave a horse in *this* town, a carriage in *that*, and my watch in *another*, as security for tavern bills. Though these articles were afterwards redeemed by better success, I felt for several weeks that the stars were unpropitious.

Dissolving with Hawley in August, I formed a co-partnership with Z. Graves, left him in charge of the establishment, and went to Ohio in quest of Pentland, to re-engage him. I met him at Tiffin.

I was a stranger in the town, but religious conversation at the hotel introduced me to several gentlemen, who solicited me to lecture on certain subjects which we had discussed. I complied, and the town school-house was crowded by an attentive congregation in the afternoon and evening of the Sabbath. A gentleman from Republic urged me to deliver two lectures in that town on the evenings of September 4 and 5, which I did.

Having engaged Pentland and several musicians, I bought his horses and wagons, and we started for Kentucky.

About thirty miles before reaching Cincinnati, we met sev-

eral men with a large drove of hogs.⁸ One of the drovers made an insolent remark, because one of our drivers did not stop his wagon soon enough to prevent the swine from scattering a little. I replied rather tartly, comparing the man to his quadrupeds. Dismounting and approaching me, he drew and cocked a pistol, and, pointing it at my breast, swore he would blow me through if I did not apologize. I begged him to give me a few minutes for reflection, and told him if he would allow me a moment's consultation with a friend in the other wagon, the misunderstanding should be settled satisfactorily. He consented. That friend was a double-barrelled gun, loaded and capped. Seizing it, and approaching the hog drover, whose two mounted assistants were by his side, I said to him, "Now, sir, *you* must apologize, for your brains are in danger. You drew a weapon upon me for a trivial remark. You seem to hold human life at a cheap price; and now, sir, you have the choice between a load of shot and an apology."

He instantly apologized, and we entered into a different sort of conversation. We agreed that many a human life is sacrificed in sudden danger, because one or both the parties carry deadly weapons.

The prominent points at which our company performed in that western and southern tour, were Nashville (where we visited General Jackson at The Hermitage⁹), Huntsville, Tuscaloosa, and Vicksburg — of course paying due respect to numerous intermediate places. We met with various success, though on the whole we did remarkably well.

At Vicksburg we sold all our land-conveyances, excepting four horses and the "band wagon," bought the steamboat "Ceres" for \$6000, hired the captain and crew, and proceeded down the river, stopping at desirable points to open our "budget of amusement."

⁸ Mrs. Trollope, who lived in that city in 1828-1830, wrote: "... I am sure I should have liked Cincinnati much better if the people had not dealt so very largely in hogs." [Ed.]

⁹ Eleven miles east of Nashville. [Ed.]

A FRIGHTFUL GANG

At Natchez our "man-cook" left us, and I sought in vain for another. I applied to a white widow who, I had been informed, would answer the purpose. She objected, because she hoped shortly to marry a young painter. We needed a cook; our case was desperate; I called on the lover; mentioned my object; related the story; and asked him if he intended to marry the widow. He had not yet determined.

"Can't you hurry up your ideas, and marry her at once?" said I.

Certainly not. He did not know that she would have *him*, and he did not know that he would have *her*.

This was reasonable, but our case was desperate. "If you will marry her to-morrow morning, I will hire *her* at \$25 per month as cook, and *you* at the same price as painter — boarding free for both — and a bonus of \$50, cash in hand."

There was a wedding on board the boat the next morning. The bride doffed her white robes, and at noon that day we had a capital dinner.

There was an alarming and yet somewhat ludicrous scene at St. Francisville, Louisiana. During the evening performances, a man attempted to pass me at the door of the tent, claiming to have paid already for admittance. He was slightly intoxicated, and when I refused him, he aimed at me with a slung-shot. The blow mashed my hat, and grazed the protuberance where phrenologists locate "the organ of caution." Perhaps this fact had something to do with what followed.

The rejected party retired, and in few minutes returned with a frightful gang of his half-drunken companions, each with a pistol, bludgeon, or other weapon. They seemed determined to assault me forthwith. Calling upon the Mayor and other respectable citizens (who were then in the "theatre"), I claimed protection from the mob. The Mayor declared his inability to afford it against such odds, but immediate violence was restrained by his intercession.

"We will let you off on one condition," said the more moderate of the ringleaders. "We will give you exactly one hour,

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and no help, to gather up your 'traps and plunder,' get aboard your steamboat, and be off! Hurry up, for you have no time to lose. If you are on shore one moment more than an hour, look out!"

He looked at his watch, I looked at the pistols and bludgeons; and I reckon that a big tent never came down with greater speed. The whole force of the company was exerted to its utmost. Not a citizen was allowed to help us, for love or money; and an occasional "Hurry up!" kept every muscle at work. Our "traps and plunder" were tumbled in confusion on the deck of the vessel; the fireman had gotten up steam; and five minutes before the hour was out, we were ready to cast off our cables and depart.

The scamps who thus hurried us from the village had certainly a streak of both humor and honor. They were amused by our diligence; escorted us and our last load, waving pitch-pine torches; and when the boat swung into the current, they saluted us with a wild "hurrah!"

The New Orleans papers of March 19, 1838, announced the arrival of the "steamer Ceres, Captain Barnum, with a theatrical company." After a week's performances, we started for the Attakapas country.¹⁰ At Opelousas we exchanged the steamer for sugar and molasses; our company was disbanded; and I started for home, arriving in New York, June 4, 1838.

I was thoroughly disgusted with the life of an itinerant showman; and though I felt that I could succeed in that line, I always regarded it, not as an end, but as a means to something better in due time. Aiming for a respectable, permanent business, I advertised for a partner, stating the fact that I had \$2500, in cash, to invest, together with unremitting personal attention. *I received ninety-three propositions*—and *such* propositions! Whoever wishes to buy a cheap dollar's worth of knowledge how people live, or hope to live, let him spend that

¹⁰ A name once loosely applied to the region included in what now are the parishes of St. Mary, Iberia, St. Martin, Lafayette, and Vermilion. [Ed.]

IN QUAKER GARB

sum in advertising for a partner, announcing at the same time, that four or five thousand dollars are "in the wind."

One third of my letters were from porter-house keepers. I also had applications from brokers, lottery-policy men, pawn-brokers, inventors in large numbers, patent-medicine men, etc. Several of my correspondents declined naming their business, but promised, in a confidential interview, to open my eyes to mines of gold. I met several of these mysterious personages, and one of them, after much hesitation and repeated promises of secrecy, was actually a *counterfeiter*, who proposed that I should join him in the business. He showed me counterfeit coin and bank-notes; told me if I exposed him it would be certain death, but if I joined him, I should reap a rich and safe harvest. He needed the \$2500 to purchase paper and ink and procure new "dies."

A sedate, farmer-looking individual, dressed in Quaker costume, applied. He wished me to join him in an oat speculation. He said he was a broken-down merchant, but by dressing in the garb of a Quaker farmer, and buying a horse and wagon, he thought a profitable trade could be driven by purchasing oats at wholesale and selling them in bags from his wagon, in the neighborhood of 21 Bowery. Cartmen and livery-men, he said, would generally purchase more freely, and not be so particular about measuring the grain over again, if they thought they were trading with a Quaker farmer.

"Do you mean to cheat in measuring your grain?" said I.

"I should probably make it hold out," said he, with a leer which convinced me that there were better men in the State Prison.

One wool merchant from Pearl street applied. I observed that he failed in business within a month afterwards. One man had a "perpetual motion" that would make our fortunes; but unfortunately, in examining it, I discovered a main-spring slyly deposited under one of the hollow posts, and so connected as to make the motion perpetual — until it ran down!

I finally entered into co-partnership with a German named

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Proler, who brought recommendations from a city alderman. The latter also assured me, in a personal interview, that Mr. Proler was a man of honor. He was a manufacturer of paste-blackening, water-proof paste for leather, Cologne water, and bear's grease. We took the store No. 101½ Bowery, at a rent (including the dwelling) of \$600 per annum, and opened a large manufactory of the above articles. Proler manufactured and sold the goods at wholesale in Boston, Charleston, Cleveland, and various other parts of the country. I kept the accounts, and attended to sales in the store, wholesale and retail.

For some months, the business seemed to be prosperous. But when all my capital had been absorbed, and our notes of hand for additional stock were falling due, our goods meanwhile having been sold on long credit, I began to see the beauties of "the credit system." I *felt* it too, for many a sleepless night did I pass, tormented by the note in the bank that would claim my acquaintance to-morrow.

Proler was a fine-looking man, of plausible manners, but he proved himself a scamp of "the first water." The details of discovery would possess little interest to the reader. Our co-partnership was dissolved in January, 1840, Proler being the purchaser of the entire interest for \$2600, on "the credit system." Before his note was due, he packed up "bag and baggage," and sailed for Rotterdam, having swindled me most effectually. All that remained to me were the following recipes, which I present to the public, gratis:

1. "Cologne Water. — To six gallons of Alcohol, add four ounces each of the oils of Lavender, Thyme, Rosemary, Cloves, Nitre, Bergamot, and Lemon. Mix thoroughly three times a day. Let it stand twenty-four hours, then add one and a half gallons of pure spirits, only proof. Stir well, let it stand four hours, then filter through red blotting paper."

N. B. — As Americans are extremely partial to foreign productions, your sales will be increased by advertising "German

RECIPES

Cologne," and copying German labels for your bottles and boxes.

2. "Bear's Grease [made without the Bear!]. — Three pounds of hog's lard and one and a half pounds of mutton tallow. Melt them well together. Then mix, in a separate cup, two ounces each of oil of Cloves and oil of Bergamot, and one ounce each of oil of Lavender, Thyme, and Rosemary. Pour them all into the melted grease, and mix and stir them well together."

P. S. — This is the real "Genuine Bear's Grease," which will cover a bald head with beautiful, glossy, curly hair — as quickly as any other composition yet discovered. N. B. — To increase the faith of your customers, exhibit a live Bear in front of the store, with the label, "To be slaughtered next!" The same animal will answer for to-morrow. Occasionally head your advertisements, "Two more Bears killed yesterday!"

3. "Blackening [which took the premium at the Great Fair of the American Institute, held at Niblo's in 1838.]. — Put into a tub three gallons of Molasses and add three pints of Whale Oil. Mix thoroughly, and then add twenty-five pounds of Ivory Black, mixing as fast as added. When twenty pounds are mixed, put in a quart of Vinegar; then add the remaining five pounds of Ivory Black, and three half pints more of Vinegar. This must be well mixed. Then pour in a quart of Muriatic Acid, and be sure that it is well mixed. Then add a quart of oil of Vitriol. Let it be well stirred for half an hour, and your Blackening is complete. Take care not to work where the sun shines."

4. "Water-Proof Paste. — Ten pounds of Tallow and five pounds of Lard. Put in an iron pot over a slow fire. In another pot, melt very gently two and a half pounds of Beeswax cut in small pieces. Pour this into the large pot, stirring and mixing it well. When this is done, take your pot from the fire and put into it two and a half pounds of Olive Oil and a quart and half pint of Spirits of Turpentine. Then add ten or twelve pounds of

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Ivory Black, all by small quantities, and keep a boy always stirring for at least half an hour. Then put it aside till it is cold and fill your boxes. Take care not to fill your boxes where the sun is shining."

During my business connection with Proler (it was in the spring of 1839), I became acquainted with a lad named John Diamond, who was really a genius in the dancing line. I entered into a contract with his father, put him in charge of an agent, called public attention to his extraordinary merits (though I did not then appear in the transaction), and he became justly celebrated as the best negro-dancer and representative of Ethiopian "break-downs" in the land. He was indeed the prototype of the numerous performers of the sort who have surprised and amused the public these many years.

In the spring of 1840, I hired from Mr. Bradford Jones the saloon in Vauxhall Garden in New York, and opened it with a variety of performances, including singing, dancing, Yankee stories, etc. Miss Mary Taylor, the celebrated actress and singer, here made her first appearance on the stage.¹¹

My enterprise in Vauxhall did not meet my expectations, and I relinquished the establishment in August. What I should do next, was now the question. No one but myself can know how earnestly I struggled against the thought of resuming the life of an itinerant showman; but I had a dependent family, my funds were low, and as nothing better appeared, I determined

¹¹ "... The Vauxhall Gardens, which were on the Bowery Road, just below Peter Cooper's grocery store. These gardens stretched clean over to what is now Broadway, on the site where Astor built his public library. They had a high wooden fence all around with a row of trees just inside. When you got in — the gate was on the Bowery — you found a beautiful garden with gravelled walks winding in and out between the flower beds. Around the sides, between the trees, were little booths for two or three people, with a table where ginger pop, cakes, baked pears swimming in molasses, and such-like delicacies were sold. In the centre of all was a pavilion for music and performances." — White: "The Book of Daniel Drew," p. 71. — Greenwood, who gives an outer view of it, says that Vauxhall Garden was bounded by the Bowery, Art street (as Astor Place then was called), Broadway, and Fourth street. [Ed.]

once more to endure the privations, vexations, and uncertainties of a tour in the West and South.

My *large* company of performers consisted of Mr. C. D. Jenkins, an admirable singer and delineator of Yankee and other eccentric characters, Master Diamond, and a fiddler! At Troy, N. Y., I added Francis Lynch, an orphan vagabond of fourteen years of age, whose talent afterwards contributed a due portion to the interest of our entertainments. My brother-in-law, Mr. John Hallett, preceded us as agent and advertiser.

Our route of travel passed through Buffalo, Toronto, in Canada, Detroit, Chicago, Ottawa, Springfield, St. Louis, and numerous intermediate places. From the latter city, we took steamer directly to New Orleans — my company of performers having been reduced, by desertions, to Master Diamond and the fiddler!

We arrived in New Orleans, January 2, 1841, and only \$100 remained in my purse. I had started from New York with fully that amount — and four months of anxiety and toil had resulted, with the exception of some small remittances to my family, in nothing more than current expenses. In less than a fortnight afterwards my pockets were decidedly at "ebb-tide." A week's boarding was due to our good landlady, Mrs. Gillies, and I received notice to "pay or quit." I begged a little delay, assuring her that I should be in funds when Diamond had his benefit. He was at that time performing, but theatricals were dull and profits were yet in the dim future. Having no high opinion of "showmen," the worthy woman demanded security, and I put my watch into her hands as a pledge.

The tide began to flow on the 16th. That night I received nearly \$500 as my half-share of Diamond's benefit, Mr. Manager Caldwell, of the St. Charles Theatre, retaining the other half, as per agreement. The tide continued to flow; for I received \$50 the next night, and \$479 the third — the latter as my share of the profits of a grand dancing match, very much on the plan of the match in Philadelphia between Vivalla and Roberts.

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Engagements at Vicksburg and Jackson did not result so favorably, but on our return to New Orleans we again succeeded admirably — also subsequently in Mobile. Master Diamond, however, after extorting large sums of money from me, finally absconded, and I turned my face homeward by the route of the Mississippi and the Ohio, on the 12th of March.

That seven months' tour was not barren in interesting incidents, but the contrary. I have here done little more than sketch the route, and will add only a few passages of other recollections.

When we arrived in New Orleans, Tyrone Power, the justly celebrated Irish comedian, was about concluding an engagement with Manager Caldwell at the St. Charles. I was very happy to make his acquaintance. He was a man of most genial spirit. In bidding me farewell (it was January 8, 1841), he cordially wished me success, and hoped we should meet again. Poor Power! The ship on which he embarked in New York for Liverpool, passed away from these shores, and only the Lord's eye saw her settle down into the bosom of the great deep.¹²

Fanny Ellsler arrived in New Orleans about the 1st of March, to fulfil an engagement at the St. Charles. The best seats in the dress circle were sold by auction on the 4th, at an average of four dollars and a half. I thought the price enormous, and gave her manager the credit of doing what I had considered impossible, in working up public enthusiasm to fever heat. Little did I dream that I should be selling tickets in the same city for a large advance on that price, within twelve years.

When I arrived in Pittsburgh, March 30, I learned that Jenkins, who had enticed Francis Lynch from my service in St. Louis, was exhibiting the lad at the Museum, under the assumed name of "Master Diamond." I visited the performance *incog.*,

¹² This was the S. S. "President," which, bound from New York for Liverpool with 136 persons on board, was never heard from. Power (b. 1797) not only was regarded as the best stage Irishman of his time but also was a playwright and novelist and published (1836) a volume of "Impressions of America." [Ed.]

THROWN INTO JAIL

and the next day wrote Jenkins an ironical review, informing him that, on inquiry, he might possibly find me in Pittsburgh, prepared to have our law-fight forthwith, though if he preferred, I would postpone the matter until we should meet in New York!

We met the next day. He threatened suit for a libellous review, and my laughter probably instigated the revenge he attempted on the morrow. R. W. Lindsay, of whom I hired Joice Heth in Philadelphia in 1835, and whom I had not seen since that day, was at the time in Pittsburgh. By the instigation of Jenkins, Lindsay sued me for the value of a pipe of brandy, which he pretended I had promised him in addition to the purchase-money in the former transaction. The magistrate required me to give bonds of \$500. I was among strangers, could not immediately find bail, and was thrown into jail! My counsel, with whom I left such securities as were then in my possession, had me liberated about four o'clock in the afternoon.

The next morning, I arrested Jenkins for trespass in regard to Francis Lynch, and the assumption of Master Diamond's name and reputation, etc. He was sent to jail, and liberated about four o'clock in the afternoon! Each of us having had a turn in prison, we adjourned our controversy to New York — and there he got the worst of the bargain. As for Lindsay, he had been merely a tool of Jenkins, and I heard no more of his claim. Twelve years afterwards, he called upon me in Boston, with an apology. He was miserably poor, and I was highly prosperous. I hope I may be allowed to add that he did not afterwards lack a friend.

While in Pittsburgh, I formed the acquaintance of Mr. C. D. Harker, a gentleman about fifty years of age, who complained that he had nothing to do. Taking up a New York newspaper, "I will find you something to do before I lay down this paper," said I.

Almost immediately, I saw the advertisement of "Sears' Pictorial Illustrations of the Bible, price \$2.00 per copy." I had never seen the book — did not know the wholesale price; Mr.

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Harker thought he could obtain subscribers; I bought him a copy as a specimen, and agreed to furnish him as many as he required at \$1.37½. He went at it forthwith, and obtained eighty subscribers in two days, thus netting \$30.

I arrived in New York, April 23, 1841, after an absence of eight months; found my family in excellent health, and re-resolved that I would never again be an itinerant showman.

CHAPTER IX

THE AMERICAN MUSEUM

New Enterprises—Foot of the Ladder—Strong Resolutions—The American Museum—A Bold Attempt—An Interview—Propositions—Ivy Island Again—A Repulse—Tactics—The Shots Take Effect—Stratagem Foiled—The Victory—Neck or Nothing—Museum Improvements—Humbug and Reality—Niagara in the Museum—Taxed for a Cataract—The Falls in Full Flow—The Fejee Mermaid—Puzzle for Naturalists—Professor Griffin—Ways and Means—An Ingenious Work—Preliminaries—Siebold's Explanation—Grand Announcement—The Old Dutchman—A Sight of the "Mare-Maid"—Mermaid and Cigar—The Professor Nonplussed—Striking the Flag—Receipts in Contrast—The Most Popular Place of Amusement in the World—The "Moral Drama"—Famous Actors and Actresses at the Museum—Fourth-of-July Flags—Victory over the Vestrymen—St. Patrick's Day in the Morning—The "Aigress"—Zoölogical Eruption—Baby Shows and Their Object—The Buffalo Hunt—The Woolly Horse—American Indians—A Curious Spinster.

APRIL 26, 1841, I called on Robert Sears, the publisher of "Sears' Pictorial Illustrations of the Bible," and contracted for five hundred copies of the work for \$500, accepted the United States agency, opened an office, May 10, at the corner of Beekman and Nassau streets, which was subsequently taken by Mr. Redfield as a bookstore, and is the present site of the Nassau Bank. I had thus made another effort to quit the life of a showman for ever, and settle down into a respectable calling. I advertised largely, appointed agents and sub-agents, and managed in the course of six months to sell thousands of books, and at the same time to place a sufficient number in the hands of irresponsible agents to use up all my profits and all my capital!

In the mean time I again leased Vauxhall saloon, and opened it June 14, 1841. I thought it would be compromising my dig-

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nity as a "Bible man" to be known as the lessee of a theatre, and the concern was managed, under my directions, by Mr. John Hallett, my brother-in-law. We closed the season, September 25, having cleared about two hundred dollars above expenses.

Living in the city of New York with nothing to do and a family to support, in a very short time exhausted my funds, and I became about as poor as I should ever wish to be. I looked around in vain for employment congenial to my feelings, that would serve to keep my head above water. I finally obtained the post of writing advertisements and notices for the Bowery Amphitheatre,¹ my duties including daily visits to the upper stories of many newspaper offices to deliver what I had prepared, and see that they were inserted. For this I received \$4.00 per week! and was thankful for even that.

I also wrote articles for the Sunday press, for the purpose of enabling me to "keep the pot boiling" at home.

These productions afforded me a fair remuneration, but it was at best a precarious way of living, and I began to realize, seriously, that I was at the very bottom round of fortune's ladder, and that I had now arrived at an age when it was necessary to make one grand effort to raise myself above want, and to think soberly of laying up something for "a rainy day." I had hitherto been careless upon that point. I had engaged in divers enterprises, caring little what the result was, so that I made a present living for my family. I now saw that it was time to provide for the future.

About this period, I received a letter from my esteemed friend, Hon. Thomas T. Whittlesey, of Danbury. He had long held a mortgage of \$500 on a piece of property which I owned in that town. He wrote to say that he was satisfied I never would lay up anything until I could "invent a riddle"² that

¹ The New York Amphitheatre, or "Bowery Circus," was at 37 Bowery, just above Bayard street. Greenwood refers to its "mixed odors of tan-bark, gas, and peanuts." [Ed.]

² An old-fashioned word meaning "a coarse sieve." [Ed.]

SCUDDER'S FOR SALE

would hold water," and as that was not very likely to occur, I might as well pay him now as ever. That letter strengthened the resolutions I had made, and laying it aside unanswered, I said to myself, "Now, Mr. B., no more nonsense, no more living from hand to mouth, but from this moment please to concentrate your energies upon providing permanently for *the future*."

While engaged as outside clerk for the Bowery Amphitheatre, I casually learned that the collection of curiosities comprising Scudder's American Museum, at the corner of Broadway and Ann street, was for sale. It belonged to the daughters of Mr. Scudder, and was conducted for their benefit by John Furzman, under the authority of Mr. John Heath, administrator. The price asked for the entire collection was \$15,000. It had cost its founder, Mr. Scudder, probably \$50,000, and from the profits of the establishment he had been able to leave a large competency to his children. The Museum, however, had been for several years a losing concern, and the heirs were anxious to sell it.

It will not be considered surprising, under all the circumstances, that my speculative spirit should look in that direction for a permanent investment. My recent enterprises had not indeed been productive, and my funds were decidedly low; but my family was in poor health, I desired to enjoy the blessing of a fixed home — and so I repeatedly visited that Museum as a thoughtful looker-on. I saw, or believed I saw, that only energy, tact, and liberality were needed, to give it life and to put it on a profitable footing; and although it might have appeared presumptuous, on my part, to dream of buying so valuable a property without having any money to do it with, I seriously determined to make the purchase, if possible.

I met a friend one day in the street, and told him my intentions. "*You buy the American Museum?*" said he with surprise, for he knew that my funds were at ebb-tide. "*What do you intend buying it with?*"

"*Brass*," I replied, "for silver and gold I have none."

It was even so.

The Museum building, I learned, belonged to Mr. Francis W. Olmsted, a retired merchant, who had a suite of rooms in Park Place. How to approach this great man was a question. I was acquainted with no one who knew him, and to enter his presence without an introduction, I considered equivalent to being kicked out of his house. I therefore wrote him a letter, informing him that I desired to purchase the Museum collection, and that although I had no ready means, if it could be purchased upon a reasonable credit I was entirely confident that my tact and experience, added to a most determined devotion to business, would enable me to make the payments when due. On this basis I asked him to purchase the collection in his own name — give me a writing securing it to me provided I made the payments punctually, including the rent of his building — allow me twelve dollars and a half a week on which to support my family — and if at any time I failed to meet the instalment due, I would vacate the premises and forfeit all that might have been paid to that date. "In fact, Mr. Olmsted," I continued in my earnestness, "you may bind me in any way, and as tightly as you please — only give me a chance to dig out, or scratch out, and I will either do so or forfeit all the labor and trouble which I may have incurred."

I also endeavored to show Mr. Olmsted, that by making this arrangement he would secure a permanent tenant, whereas if I did not make the purchase the Museum would probably soon be closed. I added, that if he would have the goodness to grant me an interview, I should be happy to give them satisfactory references, and would also submit to any reasonable conditions which he might propose.

I took the letter myself, handed it to his servant, and in two days afterwards I received a reply, naming an hour for me to call on him. I was there at the exact moment, and Mr. Olmsted expressed himself pleased with my punctuality. He eyed me closely, and put several home questions regarding my habits

REFERENCES

and antecedents. I told him frankly my experience in the way of a caterer for public amusements — mentioned Vauxhall Garden, the circus, and several exhibitions that I had managed in the South. I was favorably impressed with Mr. Olmsted's appearance and manner. He indeed tried to assume an austere look, and to affect the aristocrat; but I thought I could see the good, open-hearted, noble *man* peering through his eyes, and a subsequent intimate acquaintance proved the correctness of my impressions respecting him.

"Who are your references?" he inquired.

"Any man in my line," I replied; "from Edmund Simpson, manager of the Park Theatre, or William Niblo, to Messrs. Welch, June, Titus, Turner, Angevine, or other circus or menagerie proprietors; also Moses Y. Beach of the New York 'Sun.'"

"Can you get any of them to call on me?" he continued.

I informed him that I could, and it was arranged that they should call on him the next day, and myself the day afterwards. My friend Niblo willingly rode down in his carriage, and had an interview with Mr. Olmsted. Mr. Beach and several others among the gentlemen named also called, and on the following morning I waited upon the arbiter of my fate.

"I don't like your references, Mr. Barnum," said Mr. Olmsted abruptly, as soon as I entered the room.

I was confused, and said I regretted to hear it.

"They all speak too well of you," he added, laughing; "in fact they talk as if they were all partners of yours, and intended to share the profits."

This intelligence, of course, pleased me. Mr. Olmsted then inquired if I could not induce some friend to give bonds as security that I should meet the instalments as they became due. I thought it was doubtful.

"Can you offer me any security in case I should make the purchase for you?" was his still more direct question.

I thought of several small pieces of land which I owned in Connecticut, but they were severely afflicted with mortgages.

"I have some land and buildings in Connecticut, but there are encumbrances on them," I replied.

"Yes, yes; I don't want mortgaged property," said Mr. O.; "I should probably have to redeem it."

During further conversation, it was agreed that if he concluded to make the purchase for me, he should retain the property until it was all paid for; and should also appoint (at my expense) a ticket-receiver and accountant, who should render him a weekly statement. It was further stipulated that I should take in an apartment in the adjoining building, hitherto used as a billiard-room, and allow therefor five hundred dollars per year, making the entire rent three thousand dollars per annum, on a lease of ten years. I felt that in all this I had been liberal in my propositions and agreements, and hoped that the wealthy landlord would demand no more concessions. But he wanted something more.

"Now," said he, "if you only had a piece of unencumbered real estate that you could offer as additional security, I think I might venture to negotiate with you."

This seemed the turning-point of my fortune. Thinks I to myself, "It is now or never," and memory rapidly ran over my small possessions in search of the coveted bit of land. Ivy Island, in all the beauty in which my youthful imagination had pictured it, came dancing to my relief. I hesitated an instant. He is amply secured already — so I thought within myself — and without some piece of land, I may lose the Museum altogether. I saw no particular harm in it, and after a moment's hesitation I replied:

"I have five acres of land in Connecticut which is free from all lien or encumbrance."

"Indeed! What did you pay for it?"

"It was a present from my late grandfather, Phineas Taylor, given me on account of my name."

"Was he rich?" inquired Mr. Olmsted.

"He was considered well off in those parts," I answered.

"Very kind in him to give you the land. It is doubtless

THROWN OVERBOARD

valuable. But I suppose you would not like to part with it, considering it was a present."

"I shall not have to part with it, if I make my payments punctually," I replied, "and I am sure I shall do that."

"Well," said Mr. Olmsted, "I think I will make the purchase for you. At all events, I'll think it over, and in the mean time you must see the administrator and heirs of the estate — get their best terms, and meet me here on my return to town a week hence."

I withdrew, and proceeded at once to the house of Mr. John Heath, the administrator. His price was \$15,000. I offered him \$10,000, payable in seven equal annual instalments, with good security. He could not think of selling at that price, and I agreed to call again.

During the week I had several interviews with Mr. Heath, and it was finally agreed that I should have it for \$12,000, payable as above — possession to be given on the 15th November. Mr. Olmsted assented to this, and a morning was appointed to draw and sign the writings. Mr. Heath appeared, but said he must decline proceeding any farther in my case, as he had sold the collection to the directors of Peale's Museum (an incorporated institution) for \$15,000, and had received \$1000 in advance.

I was thunderstruck. I appealed to his honor. He replied that he had signed no writing with me, was not therefore legally bound, and he felt it his duty to do the best he could for the orphan girls. Mr. Olmsted said he was sorry for me, but could not help me. He would now have permanent tenants who would not require him to incur any risk, and I must necessarily be thrown overboard.

I withdrew, with feelings which I need not attempt to describe. I immediately informed myself as to the character of this Peale's Museum Company. It proved to consist of a company of speculators, headed by an unsuccessful ex-president of a bank, who had bought Peale's collection for a few thousand dollars, were now to join the American Museum with it, issue

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and sell stock to the amount of \$50,000, pocket \$30,000 profits, and permit the stockholders to look out for themselves.

I went immediately to several of the editors, including Major M. M. Noah, M. Y. Beach, my good friends West, Herrick, and Ropes, of the "Atlas," and others, and stated my grievances. "Now," said I, "if you will grant me the use of your columns, I'll blow that speculation sky-high." They all consented, and I wrote a large number of squibs, cautioning the public against buying the Museum stock, ridiculed the idea of a board of broken-down bank directors engaging in the exhibition of stuffed monkey and gander skins, appealed to the case of the Zoölogical Institute, which had failed by adopting such a plan as the one now proposed, and finally told the public that such a speculation would be infinitely more unwise than Dickens' "Grand United Metropolitan Hot Muffin and Crumpet-baking and Punctual Delivery Company."³

The stock was as dead as a herring! I then went to Mr. Heath and solicited a confidential conversation. He granted it. I asked him when the directors were to pay the other \$14,000. "On the 26th day of December, or forfeit the \$1000 already paid," was the reply. I assured him that they would never pay it, that they could not raise it, and that he would ultimately find himself with the Museum collection on his hands, and if once I started off with an exhibition for the South, I would not touch the Museum at *any* price. "Now," said I, "if you will agree with me confidentially, that in case these gentlemen do not pay you on the 26th December, I may have it on the 27th for \$12,000, I will run the risk, and wait in this city until that date." He readily agreed to the proposition, but said he was sure they would not forfeit their \$1000.

"Very well," said I; "all I ask of you is, that this arrangement shall not be mentioned." He assented. "On the 27th day

³ The exact title of the organization of which Mr. Bonney was the leading spirit ("Nicholas Nickleby") was "United Metropolitan Improved Hot Muffin and Crumpet Baking and Punctual Delivery Company." [Ed.]

“NO MORE SQUIBS”

of December, at ten o'clock A.M., I wish you to meet me in Mr. Olmsted's apartments, prepared to sign the writings, provided this incorporated company do not pay you \$14,000 on the 26th.” He agreed to this, and by my request put it in writing.

From that moment I felt that the Museum was mine. I saw Mr. Olmsted, and told him so. He promised secrecy, and agreed to sign the documents if the other parties did not meet their engagement.

This was about the 15th November. To all who spoke to me about the Museum, I simply remarked, that I had lost it. In the mean time the new company could not sell a dollar's worth of stock, for I kept up a perfect shower of squibs through the papers.

About the 1st of December, I received a letter from the Secretary of the Peale's Museum Company, or rather the New York Museum Company, as it was called, desiring me to meet the directors on the following Monday morning at the Museum, when and where I should probably hear something to my advantage. I saw that the newspaper medicine was doing its office. It was evident that those gentlemen wished to purchase my silence.

I was punctual at the meeting. The “honorable board of directors” was in session. The venerable President, a gray-haired, hawk-eyed old man, who had recently been president of a broken bank, accosted me with his blindest smile and smoothest tone of language. The upshot of the matter was, they proposed to hire me to manage the united museums. I professed to take it all in earnest, and when asked to mention the salary I should expect, I specified \$3000 per annum. They complimented me on my character for ability in that department, and engaged me at the sum I demanded, my salary to commence on the 1st day of January, 1842. As I was leaving the august presence, the amiable President pleasantly remarked, “Of course, Mr. Barnum, we shall have no more of your squibs through the newspapers.”

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"I ever try to serve the interests of my employers," I replied.

The jolly directors probably had a hearty laugh so soon as I was beyond hearing their unseemly mirth. They probably meant by thus keeping me quiet to sell their stock, and permit the stockholders to throw me overboard as soon as they pleased. They thought they had caught me securely. I *knew* that I had caught *them*.

Finding that I was now removed out of the way, those directors did not fear that any other person would attempt to buy the American Museum, and they concluded not to advertise their stock until the first of January, as that would give the people longer time to forget the attacks which I had made on it. As for their promised payment on the 26th December, unaware that Mr. Heath had contracted to me for \$12,000, they thought he would cheerfully wait on them until it suited their pleasure to pay him. In fact, so unconcerned were they upon this point, that they did not even call on the administrator on the 26th inst., nor send him the slightest apology for not doing so!

On the morning of the 27th, I was at Mr. Olmsted's apartment, with my legal counsellor, Charles T. Cromwell, Esq., at half-past nine o'clock. Mr. Heath came with his lawyer punctually at ten, and before two o'clock that day I was put in formal possession of the American Museum. The first act which I performed, after being thus installed, was to write and dispatch the following note:

AMERICAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK, Dec. 27, 1841.

To the President and Directors of the New York Museum:

GENTLEMEN:—It gives me great pleasure to inform you that you are placed upon the Free List of this establishment until further notice.

P. T. BARNUM, Proprietor.

The President was astonished beyond measure, and could scarcely believe his eyes. He called upon Mr. Heath, and

THE MUSEUM'S HISTORY

learned that I had indeed bought and was in possession of the American Museum. His indignation knew no bounds. He threatened him with a prosecution, but finding that this availed him nothing, he demanded the return of the thousand dollars which had been paid on the agreement. It was refused because forfeited, and the company lost it.

No one will doubt that I now put forth all my energy. It was strictly "neck or nothing." I must either pay for the establishment within a stipulated period, or forfeit it, including all I might have paid on account, provided Mr. Olmsted should insist on the letter of the contract. Let come what would, I was determined to *deserve* success, and brain and hands and feet were alike busy in forwarding the interests of the Museum.

The nucleus of this establishment, Scudder's Museum, was formed in 1810, the year in which I was born. It was begun in Chatham street, and was afterwards transferred to the old City Hall, and from small beginnings, by purchases, and to a considerable degree by presents, it had grown to be a large and valuable collection. People in all parts of the country had sent in relics and rare curiosities; sea captains, for years, had brought and deposited strange things from foreign lands; and besides all these gifts, I have no doubt that the previous proprietor had actually expended, as was stated, \$50,000 in making the collection. No one could go through the halls, as they were when they came under my proprietorship, and see one-half there was worth seeing in a single day; and then, as I always justly boasted afterwards, no one could visit my Museum and go away without feeling that he had received the full worth of his money. In looking over the immense collection, the accumulation of so many years, I saw that it was only necessary to properly present its merits to the public, to make it the most attractive and popular place of resort and entertainment in the United States.

The system of economy necessary to support my family in the city of New York upon \$600 a year, was not only assented to by my treasure of a wife, but she expressed her willingness

1
THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

to reduce the expenses to four hundred dollars per year, if necessary.

One day, about six months after I had purchased the Museum, my friend Mr. Olmsted happened in at my ticket office about twelve o'clock, and found me alone eating my dinner, which consisted of a few slices of corned beef and bread that I had brought from home in the morning. "Is this the way you eat your dinner?" he inquired.

"I have not eaten a warm dinner since I bought the Museum, except on the Sabbath," I replied, "and I intend never to eat another on a week-day until I am out of debt."

"Ah! you are safe, and will pay for the Museum before the year is out," he replied, clapping me familiarly on the shoulder. And he was right, for in less than a year from that period, I was in full possession of the Museum as my own property, every cent having been paid out of the profits of the establishment.

Valuable as the collection was when I bought it, it was only the beginning of the American Museum as I made it. In my long proprietorship I considerably more than doubled the permanent attractions and curiosities of the establishment. In 1842, I bought and added to my collection the entire contents of Peale's Museum; in 1850, I purchased the large Peale collection in Philadelphia; and year after year, I bought genuine curiosities, regardless of cost, wherever I could find them, in Europe or America.

In 1865, the space occupied for my Museum purposes was more than double what it was in 1842. The Lecture Room, originally narrow, ill-contrived, and inconvenient, was so enlarged and improved that it became one of the most commodious and beautiful amusement halls in the city of New York. At first, my attractions and inducements were merely the collection of curiosities by day, and an evening entertainment, consisting of such variety performances as were current in ordinary shows. Then Saturday afternoons, and, soon afterwards, Wednesday afternoons were devoted to entertainments, and

CONSTANT DIVERSITY

the popularity of the Museum grew so rapidly that I presently found it expedient and profitable to open the great Lecture Room every afternoon, as well as every evening, on every week-day in the year. The first experiments in this direction, more than justified my expectations, for the day exhibitions were always more thronged than those of the evening. Of course I made the most of the holidays, advertising extensively and presenting extra inducements; nor did attractions elsewhere seem to keep the crowd from coming to the Museum. On great holidays, I gave as many as twelve performances to as many different audiences.

By degrees the character of the stage performances was changed. The transient attractions of the Museum were constantly diversified, and educated dogs, industrious fleas, automatons, jugglers, ventriloquists, living statuary, tableaux, gipsies, albinos, fat boys, giants, dwarfs, rope-dancers, live "Yankees," pantomime, instrumental music, singing and dancing in great variety, dioramas, panoramas, models of Niagara, Dublin, Paris, and Jerusalem; Hannington's dioramas of the Creation, the Deluge, Fairy Grotto, Storm at Sea; the first English Punch and Judy in this country, Italian fantoccini,⁴ mechanical figures, fancy glass-blowing, knitting machines and other triumphs in the mechanical arts; dissolving views, American Indians, who enacted their warlike and religious ceremonies on the stage⁵ — these, among others, were all exceedingly successful.

⁴ Puppets worked by concealed strings or wires; also (for the word has both meanings) the puppet-plays in which these figures are used. [Ed.]

⁵ In "My Memories of Eighty Years" (1922), Chauncey M. Depew (b. 1834) wrote (p. 365): "My first contact with Mr. Barnum occurred . . . when I was a boy up in Peekskill. . . . At that time he had a museum and a show in a building at the corner of Ann Street and Broadway, opposite the old Astor House. . . .

"There had been an Indian massacre on the Western plains. The particulars filled the newspapers and led to action by the government in retaliation. Barnum advertised that he had succeeded in securing the Sioux warriors whom the government had captured, and who would re-enact every day the bloody battle in which they were victorious.

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

I thoroughly understood the art of advertising, not merely by means of printer's ink, which I have always used freely, and to which I confess myself so much indebted for my success, but by turning every possible circumstance to my account. It was my monomania to make the Museum the town wonder and town talk. I often seized upon an opportunity by instinct, even before I had a very definite conception as to how it should be used, and it seemed, somehow, to mature itself and serve my purpose. As an illustration, one morning a stout, hearty-looking man, came into my ticket-office and begged some money. I asked him why he did not work and earn his living? He replied that he could get nothing to do and that he would be glad of any job at a dollar a day. I handed him a quarter of a dollar, told him to go and get his breakfast and return, and I would employ him at light labor at a dollar and a half a day. When he returned I gave him five common bricks.

"Now," said I, "go and lay a brick on the sidewalk at the corner of Broadway and Ann street; another close by the Museum; a third diagonally across the way at the corner of Broadway and Vesey street, by the Astor House; put down the fourth on the sidewalk in front of St. Paul's Church, opposite; then, with the fifth brick in hand, take up a rapid march from one point to the other, making the circuit, exchanging your brick at every point, and say nothing to any one."

"What is the object of this?" inquired the man.

"No matter," I replied; "all you need to know is that it brings you fifteen cents wages per hour. It is a bit of my fun, and to assist me properly you must seem to be as deaf as a post; wear a serious countenance; answer no questions; pay

"It was one of the hottest afternoons in August when I appeared there from the country. The Indians were on the top floor, under the roof. The performance was sufficiently blood-curdling to satisfy the most exacting reader of a penny-dreadful. After the performance, when the audience left, I was too fascinated to go, and remained in the rear of the hall, gazing at these dreadful savages. One of them took off his head-gear, dropped his tomahawk and scalping-knife, and said in the broadest Irish to his neighbor: 'Moike, if this weather don't cool off, I will be nothing but a grease spot.'" [Ed.]

MYSTERIOUS MOVEMENTS

no attention to any one; but attend faithfully to the work and at the end of every hour by St. Paul's clock show this ticket at the Museum door; enter, walking solemnly through every hall in the building; pass out, and resume your work."

With the remark that it was "all one to him, so long as he could earn his living," the man placed his bricks and began his round. Half an hour afterwards, at least five hundred people were watching his mysterious movements. He had assumed a military step and bearing, and looking as sober as a judge, he made no response whatever to the constant inquiries as to the object of his singular conduct. At the end of the first hour, the sidewalks in the vicinity were packed with people all anxious to solve the mystery. The man, as directed, then went into the Museum, devoting fifteen minutes to a solemn survey of the halls, and afterwards returning to his round. This was repeated every hour till sundown and whenever the man went into the Museum a dozen or more persons would buy tickets and follow him, hoping to gratify their curiosity in regard to the purpose of his movements. This was continued for several days — the curious people who followed the man into the Museum considerably more than paying his wages — till finally the policeman, to whom I had imparted my object, complained that the obstruction of the sidewalk by crowds had become so serious that I must call in my "brick man." This trivial incident excited considerable talk and amusement; it advertised me; and it materially advanced my purpose of making a lively corner near the Museum.

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From the first, it was my study to give my patrons a superfluity of novelties, and for this I make no special claim to generosity, for it was strictly a business transaction. To send away my visitors more than doubly satisfied, was to induce them to come again and to bring their friends. I meant to make people talk about my Museum; to exclaim over its wonders; to have

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

men and women all over the country say: "There is not another place in the United States where so much can be seen for twenty-five cents as in Barnum's American Museum." It was the best advertisement I could possibly have, and one for which I could afford to pay. I knew, too, that it was an honorable advertisement, because it was as deserved as it was spontaneous. And so, in addition to the permanent collection and the ordinary attractions of the stage, I labored to keep the Museum well supplied with transient novelties; I exhibited such living curiosities as a rhinoceros, giraffes, grizzly bears, orang-outangs, great serpents, and whatever else of the kind money would buy or enterprise secure.

Knowing that a visit to my varied attractions and genuine curiosities was well worth to any one three times the amount asked as an entrance fee, I confess that I was not so scrupulous, as possibly I should have been, about the methods used to call public attention to my establishment. The one end aimed at was to make men and women think and talk and wonder, and, as a practical result, go to the Museum. This was my constant study and occupation.

It was the world's way then, as it is now, to excite the community with flaming posters, promising almost everything for next to nothing. I confess that I took no pains to set my enterprising fellow-citizens a better example. I fell in with the world's way; and if my "puffing" was more persistent, my advertising more audacious, my posters more glaring, my pictures more exaggerated, my flags more patriotic and my transparencies more brilliant than they would have been under the management of my neighbors, it was not because I had less scruple than they, but more energy, far more ingenuity, and a better foundation for such promises. In all this, if I cannot be justified, I at least find palliation in the fact that I presented a wilderness of wonderful, instructive, and amusing realities of such evident and marked merit that I have yet to learn of a single instance where a visitor went away from the Museum complaining that he had been defrauded of his money. Surely



VIEW OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM, BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

From "Gleason's Pictorial."

BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM AT THE CORNER OF BROADWAY AND ANN STREET

Next door to the Museum may be seen the shop of John N. Genin, the harter, who obtained excellent publicity by paying \$225 at auction for the first Jenny Lind ticket sold in the United States. A sign on the front of his building reads: JENNY LIND RIDING HATS.

“ A GOOD LINE ”

this is an offset to any eccentricities to which I may have resorted to make my establishment widely known.⁶

Very soon after introducing my extra exhibitions, I purchased for \$200, a curiosity which had much merit and some absurdity. It was a model of Niagara Falls, in which the merit was that the proportions of the great cataract, the trees, rocks, and buildings in the vicinity were mathematically given, while the absurdity was in introducing “ real water ” to represent the falls. Yet the model served a purpose in making “ a good line in the bill ” — an end in view which was never neglected — and it helped to give the Museum notoriety.⁷ One day I was summoned to appear before the Board of Croton Water Commissioners,⁸ and was informed that as I paid only \$25 per annum for water at the Museum, I must pay a large extra compensation for the supply for my Niagara Falls. I begged the

⁶ This *apologia pro vita sua* in “ Struggles and Triumphs ” (1869) replaced the following passage from the 1855 “ Life ”: “ Apart from the merit and interest of these performances, and apart from every thing connected with the stage, my permanent collection of curiosities is, without doubt, abundantly worth the uniform charge of admission to all the entertainments of the establishment, and I can therefore afford to be accused of ‘ humbug ’ when I add such transient novelties as increase its attractions. If I have exhibited a questionable dead mermaid in my Museum, it should not be overlooked that I have also exhibited camelopards, a rhinoceros, bears, ourang-outangs, great serpents, etc., about which there could be no mistake because they were alive; and I should hope that a little ‘ clap-trap ’ occasionally, in the way of transparencies, flags, exaggerated pictures, and puffing advertisements, might find an offset in a wilderness of wonderful, instructive, and amusing realities. Indeed I cannot doubt that the sort of ‘ clap-trap ’ here referred to, is allowable, and that the public like a little of it mixed up with the great realities which I provide. The titles of ‘ humbug,’ and the ‘ prince of humbugs,’ were first applied to me by myself. I made these titles a part of my ‘ stock in trade,’ and may here quote a passage from the ‘ Fortunes of the Scattergood Family,’ a work by the popular English writer, Albert Smith: “ ‘ It’s a great thing to be a humbug,” said Mr. Rossett. “ I’ve been called so often. It means hitting the public in reality. Anybody who can do so, is sure to be called a humbug by somebody who can’t.” ’ ” [Ed.]

⁷ The Museum advertisements proclaimed: THE GREAT MODEL OF NIAGARA FALLS WITH REAL WATER!

⁸ The old Croton aqueduct was opened for use in 1842. The reservoir, externally in Egyptian style, was on Fifth Avenue between 40th and 42nd streets, where the Public Library now is — a site then at the city’s northern limit. [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

board not to believe all that appeared in the papers, nor to interpret my show-bills too literally, and assured them that a single barrel of water, if my pump was in good order, would furnish my falls for a month.

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. .

The "Fejee⁹ Mermaid" was by many supposed to be a curiosity manufactured by myself, or made to my order. This is not the fact. I certainly had much to do in bringing it before the public, and as I am now in the confessional mood, I will "make a clean breast" of the ways and means I adopted for that purpose. I must first, however, relate how it came into my possession and its alleged history.

Early in the summer of 1842, Moses Kimball, Esq., the popular proprietor of the Boston Museum, came to New York and exhibited to me what purported to be a mermaid. He stated that he had bought it of a sailor whose father, while in Calcutta in 1817 as captain of a Boston ship (of which Captain John Ellery was principal owner), had purchased it, believing it to be a preserved specimen of a veritable mermaid, obtained, as he was assured, from Japanese sailors. Not doubting that it would prove as surprising to others as it had been to himself, and hoping to make a rare speculation of it as an extraordinary curiosity, he appropriated \$6000 of the ship's money to the purchase of it, left the ship in charge of the mate, and went to London.

He did not realize his expectations, and returned to Boston. Still believing that his curiosity was a genuine animal and therefore highly valuable, he preserved it with great care, not stinting himself in the expense of keeping it insured, though re-engaged as ship's captain under his former employers to reimburse the sum taken from their funds to pay for the mermaid. He died possessing no other property, and his only son and heir, who placed a low estimate on his father's purchase, sold

⁹ This is the way Barnum spelled the word. [Ed.]

EXTRAORDINARY MEANS

it to Mr. Kimball, who brought it to New York for my inspection.

Such was the story. Not trusting my own acuteness on such matters, I requested my naturalist's opinion of the genuineness of the animal. He replied that he could not conceive how it was manufactured; for he never knew a monkey with such peculiar teeth, arms, hands, etc., nor had he knowledge of a fish with such peculiar fins.

"Then why do you suppose it is manufactured?" I inquired.

"Because I don't believe in mermaids," replied the naturalist.

"That is no reason at all," said I, "and therefore I'll believe in the mermaid, and hire it."

This was the easiest part of the experiment. How to modify general incredulity in the existence of mermaids, so far as to awaken curiosity to see and examine the specimen, was now the all-important question. Some extraordinary means must be resorted to, and I saw no better method than to "start the ball a-rolling" at some distance from the centre of attraction.

In due time a communication appeared in the New York "Herald," dated and mailed in Montgomery, Ala., giving the news of the day, trade, the crops, political gossip, etc., and also an incidental paragraph about a certain Dr. Griffin, agent of the Lyceum of Natural History in London, recently from Pernambuco, who had in his possession a most remarkable curiosity, being nothing less than a veritable mermaid taken among the Fejee Islands, and preserved in China, where the Doctor had bought it at a high figure for the Lyceum of Natural History.

A week or ten days afterwards, a letter of similar tenor, dated and mailed in Charleston, S. C., varying of course in the items of local news, was published in another New York paper.

This was followed by a third letter, dated and mailed in Washington city, published in still another New York paper

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—there being in addition the expressed hope that the editors of the Empire City would beg a sight of the extraordinary curiosity before Dr. Griffin took ship for England.

A few days subsequently to the publication of the thrice-repeated announcement, Mr. Lyman (who was my employee in the case of Joice Heth) was duly registered at one of the principal hotels in Philadelphia as Dr. Griffin of Pernambuco for London. His gentlemanly, dignified, yet social manners and liberality gained him a fine reputation for a few days, and when he paid his bill one afternoon, preparatory to leaving for New York the next day, he expressed his thanks to the landlord for special attention and courtesy. "If you will step to my room," said Lyman, alias Griffin, "I will permit you to see something that will surprise you." Whereupon the landlord was shown the most extraordinary curiosity in the world — a mermaid. He was so highly gratified and interested that he earnestly begged permission to introduce certain friends of his, including several editors, to view the wonderful specimen.

"Although it is no interest of mine," said the curiosity-hunter, "the Lyceum of Natural History, of which I am agent, will not be injured by granting the courtesy you request." And so an appointment was made for the evening.

The result might easily be gathered from the editorial columns of the Philadelphia papers a day or two subsequently to that interview with the mermaid. Suffice it to say, that the plan worked admirably, and the Philadelphia press aided the press of New York in awakening a wide-reaching and increasing curiosity to see the mermaid.

I may as well confess that those three communications from the South were written by myself, and forwarded to friends of mine, with instructions respectively to mail them, each on the day of its date. This fact and the corresponding post-marks did much to prevent suspicion of a hoax, and the New York editors thus unconsciously contributed to my arrangements for bringing the mermaid into public notice.

A REMARKABLE SPECIMEN

Lyman then returned to New York with his precious treasure, and putting up at the Pacific Hotel in Greenwich street as Dr. Griffin, it soon reached the ears of the wide-awake reporters for the press that the mermaid was in town. They called at the Pacific Hotel, and the polite agent of the British Lyceum of Natural History kindly permitted them to gratify their curiosity. The New York newspapers contained numerous reports of these examinations, all of which were quite satisfactory.

I am confident that the reporters and editors who examined this animal were honestly persuaded that it was what it purported to be — a veritable mermaid. Nor is this to be wondered at, since, if it was a work of art, the monkey and fish were so nicely conjoined that no human eye could detect the point where the junction was formed. The spine of the fish proceeded in a straight and apparently unbroken line to the base of the skull—the hair of the animal was found growing several inches down on the shoulders of the fish, and the application of a microscope absolutely revealed what seemed to be minute fish scales lying in myriads amidst the hair. The teeth and formation of the fingers and hands differed materially from those of any monkey or ourang-outang ever discovered, while the location of the fins was different from those of any species of the fish tribe known to naturalists. The animal was an ugly, dried-up, black-looking, and diminutive specimen, about three feet long. Its mouth was open, its tail turned over, and its arms thrown up, giving it the appearance of having died in great agony.

Assuming, what is no doubt true, that the mermaid was manufactured, it was a most remarkable specimen of ingenuity and untiring patience. For my own part I really had scarcely cared at the time to form an opinion of the origin of this creature, but it was my impression that it was the work of some ingenious Japanese, Chinaman, or other eastern genius, and that it had probably been one among the many hideous objects of Buddhist or Hindoo worship.

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

Recently, however, in reading myself up on the history of Japan, I found the following article in a work entitled "Manners and Customs of the Japanese in the Nineteenth Century, from the accounts of recent Dutch residents in Japan, and from the German work of Dr. Ph. Fr. Von Siebold":¹⁰

Another Japanese fisherman displayed his ingenuity in a less honorable and useful form than Kiyemon, to make money out of his countrymen's passion for whatever is odd and strange. He contrived to unite the upper half of a monkey to the lower half of a fish, so neatly as to defy ordinary inspection. He then gave out that he had caught the creature alive in his net, but that it had died shortly after being taken out of the water; and he derived considerable pecuniary profit from his device in more ways than one. The exhibition of the sea monster to Japanese curiosity paid well; but yet more productive was the assertion that the half-human fish had spoken during the few minutes it existed out of its native element, predicting a certain number of years of wonderful fertility, to be followed by a fatal epidemic, the only remedy against which would be possession of the marine prophet's likeness. The sale of these pictured mermaids was immense. Either this composite animal, or another, the offspring of the success of the first, was sold to the Dutch factory and transmitted to Batavia, where it fell into the hands of a shrewd American, who brought it to Europe, and there, in the years 1822-3, exhibited his purchase as a real mermaid, at every capital, to the admiration of the ignorant, the perplexity of the learned, and the filling of his own purse.

Is it not a plausible conjecture that this account relates to the identical mermaid exhibited in the American Museum? Certainly the method adopted to induce people to buy the likeness, as related by Siebold, fairly entitles my Japanese *confrère* to the palm and title of "Prince of Humbugs."¹¹

¹⁰ Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796-1866), a Bavarian, was in Japan on a Dutch mission in 1823-1830 and published "Nippon, Archiv zur Beschreibung von Japan" (1832), as well as works on Japanese flora, fauna, and bibliography. [Ed.]

¹¹ "Struggles and Triumphs" (1869) says: "I may mention here that this

SMALLER EXAMPLES

Smaller specimens, purporting to be mermaids, but less elaborately gotten up, have been seen in various museums. I believe they are all made in Japan. I purchased one in the Peale collection in Philadelphia. It was burnt at the time the Museum opened by me in that city was destroyed by fire in 1851.

A small specimen, I have been informed, is also now lying on a shelf in the Royal Museum of Indian Antiquities at The Hague. I understand that it was purchased for the collection from an American sea-captain, who procured it in China, probably an importation from Japan.¹²

While Lyman was preparing public opinion on mermaids at the Pacific Hotel, I was industriously at work (though of

identical preserved specimen was exhibited in London in 1822, as I fully verified in my visit to that city in 1858, for I found an advertisement of it in an old file of the London 'Times,' and a friend gave me a copy of the 'Mirror,' published . . . November 9, 1822, containing a cut of this same creature and two pages of letter-press describing it." . . . [Ed.]

¹² Moncure D. Conway, in an article on "Monsters," in "Harper's New Monthly Magazine" for December, 1881 (pp. 97-106), says: "In a shop window at Ostend I found the 'Japanese Siren.' It was curious enough. A little human-like head and face, with hair, neck, shoulders, breast, arms, and delicately formed hands, at the waist turned into a fish. It was about a foot long, and took care to be dead and beneath glass. The fashionable world was passing and repassing, and many paused to gaze at the Siren. After inspecting the curiosity, appraised at five hundred francs, my own attention was presently transferred to the crowds who stopped to see and comment upon it. Some entered the shop and asked the keeper of it if the creature were 'veritable.' He assured them unhesitatingly that it was, and had been so pronounced by all the *savants* who had examined it. To each this assurance appeared satisfactory. No suspicion that the shop-keeper might not confess his possession to be fraudulent, even if it were, prevented the frequent repetition of the inquiry, or diminished the conviction it seemed to carry. It could not be expected, of course, that an average imagination unequal to the exigencies of speculative ventures in a sea-side curiosity-shop would be able to soar with the more daring vision of the Oriental artist. The Japanese contriver had rightly fathomed the mental shallows in which his sirens could float. He commissioned one or two to adventure London; one of these found its way to the scalpel of the Hunterian professor (Flower), who tells me that the upper part was part of a small monkey, and the connection at the waist with the fish most ingenious." (Page 98.) — Sir William Flower (1831-1899) was a prominent English zoölogist, from 1884 director of the British Museum's natural-history department. [Ed.]

course privately) in getting up wood-cuts and transparencies, as well as a pamphlet, proving the authenticity of mermaids, all in anticipation of the speedy exhibition of Dr. Griffin's specimen. I had three several and distinct pictures of mermaids engraved, and with a peculiar description written for each, had them inserted in 10,000 copies of the pamphlet which I had printed and quietly stored away in a back office until the time came to use them.

I then called respectively on the editors of the New York "Herald," and two of the Sunday papers, and tendered to each the free use of a mermaid cut, with a well-written description, for their papers of the ensuing Sunday. I informed each editor that I had hoped to use this cut in showing the Fejee Mermaid, but since Mr. Griffin had announced that as agent for the Lyceum of Natural History, he could not permit it to be exhibited in America, my chance seemed dubious, and therefore he was welcome to the use of the engraving and description. The three mermaids made their appearance in the three different papers on the morning of Sunday, July 17, 1842.

Each editor supposed he was giving his readers an exclusive treat in the mermaid line, but when they came to discover that I had played the same game with the three different papers, they pronounced it a *scalpy* trick.

The mermaid fever was now getting pretty well up. Few city readers had missed seeing at least one of the illustrations, and as the several printed descriptions made direct allusion to *the* mermaid of Mr. Griffin now in town, a desire to see it was generally prevailing. My 10,000 mermaid pamphlets were then put into the hands of boys, and sold at a penny each (half the cost) in all the principal hotels, stores, etc., etc.

When I thought the public was thoroughly "posted up" on the subject of mermaids, I sent an agent to engage Concert Hall, Broadway, for the exhibition, and the newspapers immediately contained the following advertisement:



From the "Life" (1855).

A BARNUM "MERMAID CUT"

One of three cuts that Barnum had made for insertion in an advertising pamphlet and in New York newspapers. This one appeared in the "Atlas" for Sunday, July 17, 1842.



From "Harper's New Monthly Magazine" for December 1881.

THE JAPANESE SIREN

Moncure Conway saw a "mermaid" like this in a shop at Ostend. The shopkeeper unhesitatingly assured inquirers that it was *veritable*.

CONNECTING LINKS

THE MERMAID, AND OTHER WONDERFUL SPECIMENS OF THE ANIMAL CREATION. — The public are respectfully informed that, in accordance with numerous and urgent solicitations from scientific gentlemen in this city, Mr. J. GRIFFIN, proprietor of the Mermaid, recently arrived from Pernambuco, S. A., has consented to exhibit it to the public, *positively for one week only!* For this purpose he has procured the spacious saloon known as Concert Hall, 404 Broadway, which will open on Monday, August 8, 1842, and will positively close on Saturday the 13th inst.

This animal was taken near the Fejee Islands, and purchased for a large sum by the present proprietor, for the Lyceum of Natural History in London, and is exhibited for this short period more for the gratification of the public than for gain. The proprietor having been engaged for several years in various parts of the world in collecting wonderful specimens in Natural History, has in his possessions, and will at the same time submit to public inspection, THE ORNITHORHINCHUS, from New Holland, being the connecting link between the Seal and the Duck. THE FLYING FISH, two distinct species, one from the Gulf Stream, and the other from the West Indies. This animal evidently connects the Bird with the Fish. THE PADDLE-TAIL SNAKE from South America. THE SIREN, or MUD IGUANA, an intermediate animal between the Reptile and the Fish. THE PROTEUS SANGUIHUS, a subterraneous animal from a grotto in Australia — with other animals forming connecting links in the great chain of Animated Nature.

Tickets of admission 25 cents each.¹³

A large number of visitors attended Concert Hall, and Lyman, alias Griffin, exhibited the mermaid with much dignity.

¹³ In this announcement the spelling and the science are alike remarkable. For "Ornithorhinchus" read, of course, "Ornithorhynchus." "Proteus Sanguihus" is properly *Proteus anguinus*. Instead of "grotto in Australia," we should probably have "grotto in Austria" — the cave salamander being a European form. Some idea, though muddled, of organic evolution is here suggested. [Ed.]

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I could not help fearing that some of the Joice Heth victims would discover in Professor Griffin the exhibitor of the "nurse of Washington," but happily no such catastrophe occurred. Lyman, surrounded by numerous connecting links in nature, as set forth in the advertisement, and with the hideous-looking mermaid firmly secured from the hands of visitors by a glass vase, enlightened his audiences by curious accounts of his travels and adventures, and by scientific harangues upon the works of nature in general, and mermaids in particular.

The public appeared to be satisfied, but as some persons always *will* take things literally, and make no allowance for poetic license even in mermaids, an occasional visitor, after having seen the large transparency in front of the hall, representing a beautiful creature half woman and half fish, about eight feet in length, would be slightly surprised in finding that the reality was a black-looking specimen of dried monkey and fish that a boy a few years old could easily run away with under his arm.

Several days subsequent to the opening of the exhibition at Concert Hall, an old Dutchman came to the Museum and said to me, in a drawling tone of voice, "Where is the *mare*-maid?"

"We have no mermaid here, sir," I replied.

"I've come over from Jarsey on purpose to see the mare-maid. I thought it was here."

I informed him that I had seen it advertised at Concert Hall, Broadway. He started off in pursuit of the object of his curiosity, remarking as he turned to go down stairs, "I have never seen a *mare*-maid. It's alive I s'pose, ain't it?" But I did not profess ability to enlighten him on that point.

Immediately afterwards, I went up to Concert Hall to see how the exhibition was progressing, and just as I passed in, I saw the old Dutchman purchasing a ticket at the foot of the stairs. I found Lyman surrounded with twenty or thirty ladies and gentlemen, to whom he was learnedly descanting on the wonders of nature, as illustrated in the objects on the table



From the "Life" (1855).

ANOTHER "MERMAID CUT"

This appeared in the New York "Mercury" for Sunday, July 17, 1842.



From the "Life" (1855).

THE "FEJEE MERMAID" AS IT REALLY WAS
Reduced from a likeness in the "Sunday Herald" (New York).

A LUDICROUS SIGHT

before them. They were all attention. Presently the old Dutchman entered, and upon looking around, and being unable to discover the beautiful living lady-fish so elegantly displayed upon the transparency at the door, he approached Lyman, and, interrupting him in his learned discourse, said to him, "I want to see the *mare-maid*."

Lyman, somewhat disconcerted, but with as much dignity and deliberation as he could command, replied, "That is the mermaid, sir," at the same time pointing to the article in question.

The old Dutchman looked upon the diminutive, ugly creature, and exclaimed in great surprise, "Do you call *that* the *mare-maid*?"

"Yes, sir, that is the mermaid," said Lyman, evidently ill at ease. The Dutchman, with a look of scorn such as I have rarely seen equalled, turned to depart, exclaiming, "Well, that is the poorest show I ever *did* see."

On one occasion Lyman left the room for a few minutes. There were few visitors present, principally young students from the Medical College in Barclay street. Perceiving her fishship without protector, and being ripe for a joke, they removed the glass vase which covered the mermaid, and thrust into her mouth a cigar from which perhaps half an inch had been "whiffed." They replaced the vase and decamped.

Before Lyman returned, a score or more ladies and gentlemen had entered the room, and it is difficult to say what their feelings were when they saw the little, black, dried mermaid with a cigar in her mouth! They probably felt that the whole thing was an imposition, and that the exhibitor was purposely insulting his customers. Certainly it was the most ridiculous and ludicrous sight that can easily be conceived.

Lyman, wholly unconscious of the wicked trick which had been played upon him, and seeing the respectable number of visitors, approached the table with a dignity which no man could assume better than himself; and, without happening to

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cast his eyes upon the mermaid, commenced his usual harangue: "You see before you, ladies and gentlemen, the extraordinary mermaid captured at the Fejee Islands. The mermaid has long been deemed a fabulous animal by many persons, including naturalists, but the evidence I possess, as agent for the Lyceum of Natural History in London, places the fact beyond all reasonable doubt, that this identical animal was taken in a fisherman's net at the Fejee Islands. It lived upwards of three hours after its capture."

"Was her ladyship smoking the same cigar when she was captured that she is enjoying at present?" asked one of the gentlemen.

Poor Lyman now for the first time discovered the cigar, and this was probably the first and only time in his life that he was completely nonplussed, and could not utter a word in reply. In relating the incident (which he afterwards did with great gusto in the private circles of his friends), he declared that when he discovered that cigar, he began to perspire as if he had been mowing a heavy crop of grass, and that very soon he had not a dry thread upon his back.

The mermaid remained a single week at Concert Hall, and was then advertised to be seen at the American Museum, "without extra charge." Numerous transparencies had been prepared; show-bills were posted with a liberal hand; and on Monday morning, a flag representing a mermaid eighteen feet in length was streaming directly in front of the Museum. Lyman saw it as he was slowly approaching to commence operations. He quickened his pace, entered my office, and demanded, "What in the name of all conscience is that immense flag out for?"

"In order that nobody shall enter Broadway without knowing where to find the mermaid," I replied.

"Well, that flag must come in. Nobody can satisfy the public with our dried-up specimen *eighteen inches* long, after exhibiting a picture representing it as *eighteen feet*. It is preposterous."

THE FLAG LOWERED

"Oh, nonsense," I replied; "that is only to catch the eye. They don't expect to see a mermaid of that size."

"I tell you it won't do," replied Lyman. "I think I ought to know something of the public 'swallow' by this time, and I tell you the mermaid won't go down if that flag remains up."

"That flag cost me over seventy dollars, and it must remain up," I replied.

Lyman deliberately buttoned his coat, and said as he slowly walked towards the door, "Well, Mr. Barnum, if you like to fight under that flag, you can do so, but *I* won't."

"What! you are a deserter, then!" I replied, laughing.

"Yes, I desert false colors when they are too strong," said Lyman; "and *you* will desert them before night," he continued.

I could not spare "Professor Griffin," and was reluctantly compelled to take down the flag. It never saw the light again.*

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That "her ladyship" was an attractive feature,¹⁴ may be inferred from these facts and figures:

The receipts of the American Museum for the four weeks

* Lyman afterwards became a prominent Mormon, and removed to Nauvoo, where he died.

¹⁴ In the 1855 "Life," Barnum wrote: "The mermaid was afterwards exhibited in various parts of the country, and finally returned to its owner, Mr. Kimball, who has ever since given it a prominent niche in his truly beautiful and attractive Boston Museum. There it will remain until the 31st day of March, 1855. On the 1st of April next (a most appropriate day), it will again make its appearance in my American Museum, New York, where it will remain until January 1st, 1856, to the admiration and astonishment, no doubt, of many thousand patrons. On the 2d day of January, 1856, the mysterious lady-fish will again take up her old quarters under the guardianship of her owner, the Hon. Moses Kimball (he having recently been elected to the State Senate, and thus acquired the title), and from that period the Fejee Mermaid will be installed as a prominent and interesting *fixture* in the Boston Museum."

It does not appear that the "admiration and astonishment" of the public were aroused to any great degree. So far as Barnum was concerned, however, the curiosity had served its purpose. [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

immediately preceding the exhibition of the mermaid, amounted to \$1272. During the first four weeks of the mermaid's exhibition, the receipts amounted to \$3341.93.*

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While I expended money liberally for attractions for the inside of my Museum, and bought or hired everything curious or rare which was offered or could be found, I was prodigal in my outlays to arrest or arouse public attention. When I became proprietor of the establishment, there were only the words: "American Museum" to indicate the character of the concern; there was no bustle or activity about the place; no posters to announce what was to be seen; — the whole exterior was as dead as the skeletons and stuffed skins within. My experiences had taught me the advantages of advertising.¹⁵ I printed whole

* The receipts of the Museum for the three years immediately preceding my purchase, as compared with the first three years of my administration, were as follows:

1839.....Receipts, \$11,780	1842.....Receipts, \$27,912 62
1840....." 11,169	1843....." 32,623 35
1841....." 10,862	1844....." 39,893 46
Aggregate.....\$33,811	Aggregate....\$100,429 43

In the year 1853, the receipts amounted to \$136,250, being in one year, more than in the six years above quoted. It will of course be understood that the expenses of the Museum increased in a corresponding ratio.

¹⁵ From 1869 onward, Barnum's account of the Mermaid was greatly condensed and to it were added these explanatory words: "I used it [the Mermaid] mainly to advertise the regular business of the Museum, and this effective indirect advertising is the only feature I can commend, in a special show of which, I confess, I am not proud. I might have published columns in the newspapers, presenting and praising the great collection of genuine specimens of natural history in my exhibition, and they would not have attracted nearly so much attention as did a few paragraphs about the mermaid which was only a small part of my show. Newspapers throughout the country copied the mermaid notices, for they were novel and caught the attention of readers. Thus was the fame of the Museum, as well as the mermaid, wafted from one end of the land to the other. I was careful to keep up the excitement, for I knew that every dollar sown in advertising would return in tens, and perhaps hundreds, in a future harvest, and after obtaining all the notoriety possible by advertising and by exhibiting the mermaid at the

FREE MUSIC

columns in the papers, setting forth the wonders of my establishment. Old "fogies" opened their eyes in amazement at a man who could expend hundreds of dollars in announcing a show of "stuffed monkey skins"; but these same old fogies paid their quarters, nevertheless, and when they saw the curiosities and novelties in the Museum halls, they, like all other visitors, were astonished as well as pleased, and went home and told their friends and neighbors and thus assisted in advertising my business.

For other and not less effective advertising — flags, and banners — began to adorn the exterior of the building. I kept a band of music on the front balcony and announced "Free Music for the Million." People said, "Well, that Barnum is a liberal fellow to give us music for nothing," and they flocked down to hear my outdoor free concerts. But I took pains to select and maintain the poorest band I could find — one whose discordant notes would drive the crowd into the Museum, out of earshot of my outside orchestra. Of course, the music was poor. When people expect to get "something for nothing" they are sure to be cheated, and generally deserve to be, and so, no doubt, some of my out-door patrons were sorely disappointed; but when they came inside and paid to be amused and instructed, I took care to see that they not only received the full worth of their money, but were more than satisfied. Powerful Drummond lights were placed at the top of the Museum, which, in the darkest night, threw a flood of light up and down Broadway, from the Battery to Niblo's, that would enable one to read a newspaper in the street.¹⁶ These were the first Drummond lights ever seen in New York, and they made people talk, and so advertise my Museum.

Museum, I sent the curiosity throughout the country, directing my agent to everywhere advertise it as 'From Barnum's Great American Museum, New York.' The effect was immediately felt; money flowed in rapidly and was readily expended in more advertising." [Ed.]

¹⁶ The calcium light was then known as the "Drummond light," from its inventor, Captain Drummond. [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

The American Museum was the ladder by which I rose to fortune. Whenever I cross Broadway at the head of Vesey street, and see the "Herald" building and that gorgeous pile, the Park Bank, my mind's eye recalls that less solid, more showy edifice which once occupied the site and was covered with pictures of all manner of beasts, birds, and creeping things, and in which were treasures that brought treasures and notoriety and pleasant hours to me. The Jenny Lind enterprise was more audacious, more immediately remunerative, and I remember it with a pride which I do not attempt to conceal; but instinctively I often go back and live over again the old days of my struggles and triumphs in the American Museum.

The Museum was always open at sunrise, and this was so well known throughout the country that strangers coming to the city would often take a tour through my halls before going to breakfast or to their hotels. I do not believe there was ever a more truly popular place of amusement. I frequently compared the annual number of visitors with the number officially reported as visiting (free of charge) the British Museum in London, and my list was invariably the larger. Nor do I believe that any man or manager ever labored more industriously to please his patrons. I furnished the most attractive exhibitions which money could procure; I abolished all vulgarity and profanity from the stage, and I prided myself upon the fact that parents and children could attend the dramatic performances in the so-called Lecture Room, and not be shocked or offended by anything they might see or hear; I introduced the "Moral Drama," producing such plays as "The Drunkard," "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Moses in Egypt," "Joseph and His Brethren," and occasional spectacular melodramas produced with great care and at considerable outlay.

Mr. Sothorn, who has since attained such wide-spread celebrity at home and abroad as a character actor, was a member of my dramatic company for one or two seasons. Mr. Barney Williams also began his theatrical career at the Museum, occupying, at first, quite a subordinate position, at a salary of ten

IN THE LECTURE ROOM

dollars a week. During the past twelve or fifteen years, I presume his weekly receipts, when he has acted, have been nearly \$3,000. The late Miss Mary Gannon also commenced at the Museum, and many more actors and actresses of celebrity have been, from time to time, engaged there.¹⁷ What was once the small Lecture Room was converted into a spacious and beautiful theatre, extending over the lots adjoining the Museum, and capable of holding about three thousand persons. The saloons were greatly multiplied and enlarged, and the "egress" having been made to work to perfection, on holidays I advertised Lecture Room performances every hour through the afternoon and evening, and consequently the actors and actresses were dressed for the stage as early as eleven o'clock in the morning, and did not resume their ordinary clothes till ten o'clock at night. In these busy days the meals for the company were brought in and served in the dressing-rooms and green-rooms, and the company always received extra pay.

Leaving nothing undone that would bring Barnum and his Museum before the public, I often engaged some exhibition, knowing that it would directly bring no extra dollars to the treasury, but hoping that it would incite a newspaper paragraph which would float through the columns of the American press and be copied, perhaps, abroad, and my hopes in this respect were often gratified.

I confess that I liked the Museum mainly for the opportunities it afforded for rapidly making money. Before I bought it, I weighed the matter well in my mind, and was convinced that I could present to the American public such a variety, quantity, and quality of amusement, blended with instruction, "all for twenty-five cents, children half price," that my attractions would be irresistible, and my fortune certain. I myself relished

¹⁷ E. A. Sothern (1826-1881) first appeared in the United States in 1852. Barney Williams was the stage name of Bernard Flaherty (1823-1876), who became popular as an Irish comedian. Mary Gannon (1829-1868) was an American comédienne of ability. [Ed.]

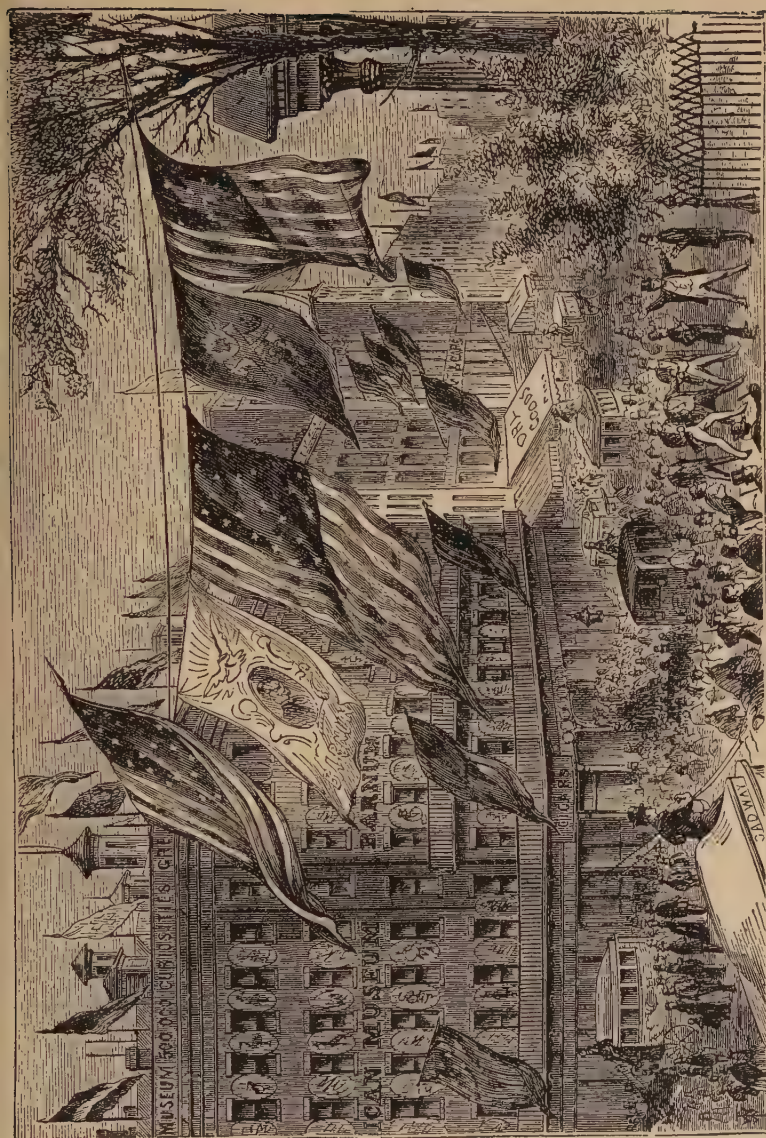
THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

a higher grade of amusement, and I was a frequent attendant at the opera, first-class concerts, lectures, and the like; but I worked for the million, and I knew the only way to make a million from my patrons was to give them abundant and wholesome attractions for a small sum of money.

About the first of July, 1842, I began to make arrangements for extra novelties, additional performances, a large amount of extra advertising, and an outdoor display for the "Glorious Fourth." Large parti-colored bills were ordered, transparencies were prepared, the free band of music was augmented by a trumpeter, and columns of advertisements, headed with large capitals, were written and put on file.

I wanted to run out a string of American flags across the street on that day, for I knew there would be thousands of people passing the Museum with leisure and pocket-money, and I felt confident that an unusual display of national flags would arrest their patriotic attention, and bring many of them within my walls. Unfortunately for my purpose, St. Paul's Church stood directly opposite, and there was nothing to which I could attach my flag-rope, unless it might be one of the trees in the church-yard. I went to the vestrymen for permission to so attach my flag-rope on the Fourth of July, and they were indignant at what they called my "insulting proposition"; such a concession would be "sacrilege." I plied them with arguments, and appealed to their patriotism, but in vain.

Returning to the Museum I gave orders to have the string of flags made ready, with directions at daylight on the Fourth of July to attach one end of the rope to one of the third story windows of the Museum, and the other end to a tree in St. Paul's churchyard. The great day arrived, and my orders were strictly followed. The flags attracted great attention, and before nine o'clock I have no doubt that hundreds of additional visitors were drawn by this display into the Museum. By half-past nine Broadway was thronged, and about that time two gentlemen in a high state of excitement rushed into my office



THE SHOWMAN AND THE VESTRYMEN

Barnum Parleys with the Irate Representatives of St. Paul's. (From the 1869 "Struggles and Triumphs.")

“WELL, MISTER,—”

announcing themselves as injured and insulted vestrymen of St. Paul's Church.

“Keep cool, gentlemen,” said I. “I guess it is all right.”

“Right!” indignantly exclaimed one of them. “Do you think it is right to attach your Museum to our Church? We will show you what is ‘right’ and what is law, if we live till to-morrow; those flags must come down instantly.”

“Thank you,” I said, “but let us not be in a hurry. I will go out with you and look at them, and I guess we can make it all right.”

Going into the street I remarked: “Really, gentlemen, these flags look very beautiful; they do not injure your tree; I always stop my balcony music for your accommodation whenever you hold week-day services, and it is but fair that you should return the favor.”

“We could indict your ‘music,’ as you call it, as a nuisance, if we chose,” answered one vestryman, “and now I tell you that if these flags are not taken down in ten minutes, *I* will cut them down.”

His indignation was at the boiling point. The crowd in the street was dense, and the angry gesticulation of the vestryman attracted their attention. I saw there was no use in trying to parley with him or coax him, and so, assuming an angry air, I rolled up my sleeves, and exclaimed, in a loud tone, —

“Well, mister, I should just like to see you dare to cut down the American flag on the Fourth of July; you must be a ‘Britisher’ to make such a threat as that; but I’ll show you a thousand pairs of Yankee hands in two minutes, if you dare to attempt to take down the stars-and-stripes on this great birthday of American freedom!”

“What’s that John Bull a-saying,” asked a brawny fellow, placing himself in front of the irate vestryman. “Look here, old fellow,” he continued, “if you want to save a whole bone in your body, you had better slope, and never dare to talk again about hauling down the American flag in the city of New York.”

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

Throngs of excited, exasperated men crowded around, and the vestryman, seeing the effect of my ruse, smiled faintly and said, "Oh, of course it is all right," and he and his companion quietly edged out of the crowd. The flags remained up all day and all night. The next morning I sought the vanquished vestrymen and obtained formal permission to make this use of the tree on following holidays, in consideration of my willingness to arrest the doleful strains of my discordant balcony band whenever services were held on week-days in the church.

On that Fourth of July, at one o'clock, P.M., my Museum was so densely crowded that we could admit no more visitors, and we were compelled to stop the sale of tickets. I pushed through the throng until I reached the roof of the building, hoping to find room for a few more, but it was in vain. Looking down into the street, it was a sad sight to see the thousands of people who stood ready with their money to enter the Museum, but who were actually turned away. It was exceedingly harrowing to my feelings. Rushing down stairs, I told my carpenter and his assistants to cut through the partition and floor in the rear and to put in a temporary flight of stairs so as to let out people by that egress into Ann street. By three o'clock the egress was opened and a few people were passed down the new stairs, while a corresponding number came in at the front. But I lost a large amount of money that day by not having sufficiently estimated the value of my own advertising, and consequently not having provided for the thousands who had read my announcements and seen my outside show, and had taken the first leisure day to visit the Museum. I had learned one lesson, however, and that was to have the egress ready on future holidays.

Early in the following March, I received notice from some of the Irish population that they meant to visit me in great numbers on "St. Patrick's day in the morning." "All right," said I to my carpenter, "get your egress ready for March 17"; and I added, to my assistant manager: "If there is much of a crowd, don't let a single person pass out at the front,

even if it were St. Patrick himself; put every man out through the egress in the rear.” The day came, and before noon we were caught in the same dilemma as we were on the Fourth of July; the Museum was jammed and the sale of tickets was stopped. I went to the egress and asked the sentinel how many hundreds had passed out.

“ Hundreds,” he replied, “ why, only three persons have gone out by this way and they came back, saying that it was a mistake and begging to be let in again.”

“ What does this mean ? ” I inquired. “ Surely thousands of people have been all over the Museum since they came in.”

“ Certainly,” was the reply, “ but after they have gone from one saloon to another and have been on every floor, even to the roof, they come down and travel the same route over again.”

At this time I espied a tall Irish woman with two good-sized children whom I had happened to notice when they came in early in the morning.

“ Step this way, madam,” said I politely, “ you will never be able to get into the street by the front door without crushing these dear children. We have opened a large egress here and you can pass by these rear stairs into Ann street and thus avoid all danger.”

“ Sure,” replied the woman, indignantly, “ an’ I’m not going out at all, at all, nor the children aither, for we’ve brought our dinners and we are going to stay all day.”

Further investigation showed that pretty much all of my visitors had brought their dinners with the evident intention of literally “ making a day of it.” No one expected to go home till night; the building was overcrowded, and meanwhile hundreds were waiting at the front entrance to get in when they could. In despair I sauntered upon the stage behind the scenes, biting my lips with vexation, when I happened to see the scene-painter at work and a happy thought struck me: “ Here,” I exclaimed, “ take a piece of canvas four feet square, and paint on it, as soon as you can, in large letters —

 TO THE EGRESS.

Seizing his brush, he finished the sign in fifteen minutes, and I directed the carpenter to nail it over the door leading to the back stairs. He did so, and as the crowd, after making the entire tour of the establishment, came pouring down the main stairs from the third story, they stopped and looked at the new sign, while some of them read audibly: "To the Aigress."

"The Aigress," said others, "sure that's an animal we haven't seen," and the throng began to pour down the back stairs only to find that the "Aigress" was the elephant, and that the elephant was all out o' doors, or so much of it as began with Ann street. Meanwhile, I began to accommodate those who had long been waiting with their money at the Broadway entrance.

Notwithstanding my continual outlays for additional novelties and attractions, or rather I might say, because of these outlays, money poured in upon me so rapidly that I was sometimes actually embarrassed to devise means to carry out my original plan for laying out the entire profits of the first year in advertising. I meant to sow first and reap afterwards. I finally hit upon a plan which cost a large sum, and that was to prepare large oval oil paintings to be placed between the windows of the entire building, representing nearly every important animal known in zoölogy. These paintings were put on the building in a single night, and so complete a transformation in the appearance of an edifice is seldom witnessed. When the living stream rolled down Broadway the next morning and reached the Astor House corner, opposite the Museum, it seemed to meet with a sudden check. I never before saw so many open mouths and astonished eyes. Some people were puzzled to know what it all meant; some looked as if they thought it was an enchanted palace that had suddenly sprung up; others exclaimed. "Well, the animals all seem to have 'broken out' last night," and hundreds came in to see how

AN INSTITUTION

the establishment survived the sudden eruption. At all events, from that morning the Museum receipts took a jump forward of nearly a hundred dollars a day, and they never fell back again. Strangers would look at this great pictorial magazine and argue that an establishment with so many animals on the outside must have something on the inside, and in they would go to see. Inside, I took particular pains to please and astonish these strangers, and when they went back to the country, they carried plenty of pictorial bills and lithographs, which I always lavishly furnished, and thus the fame of Barnum's Museum became so widespread that people scarcely thought of visiting the city without going to my establishment.

In fact, the Museum had become an established institution in the land. Now and then some one would cry out "humbug" and "charlatan," but so much the better for me. It helped to advertise me, and I was willing to bear the reputation — and I engaged queer curiosities, and even monstrosities, simply to add to the notoriety of the Museum.

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On several occasions I got up "baby shows" at which I paid liberal prizes for the finest baby, the fattest baby, the handsomest twins, for triplets, and so on. I always gave several months' notice of these intended shows and limited the number of babies at each exhibition to one hundred. Long before the appointed time, the list would be full and I have known many a fond mother to weep bitterly because the time for application was closed and she could not have the opportunity to exhibit her beautiful baby. These shows were as popular as they were unique, and while they paid in a financial point of view, my chief object in getting them up was to set the newspapers to talking about me, thus giving another blast on the trumpet which I always tried to keep blowing for the Museum. Flower shows, dog shows, poultry shows, and bird shows, were held at intervals in my establishment and in each

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

instance the same end was attained as by the baby shows. I gave prizes in the shape of medals, money, and diplomas and the whole came back to me four-fold in the shape of advertising.

There was great difficulty, however, in awarding the principal prize of \$100 at the baby shows. Every mother thought her own baby the brightest and best, and confidently expected the capital prize.

For where was ever seen the mother
Would give her baby for another?¹⁸

Not foreseeing this when I first stepped into the expectant circle and announced in a matter of fact way that a committee of ladies had decided upon the baby of Mrs. So-and-so as entitled to the leading prize, I was ill-prepared for the storm of indignation that arose on every side. Ninety-nine disappointed, and as they thought, deeply injured, mothers made common cause and pronounced the successful little one the meanest, homeliest baby in the lot, and roundly abused me and my committee for our stupidity and partiality. "Very well, ladies," said I in the first instance, "select a committee of your own and I will give another \$100 prize to the baby you shall pronounce to be the best specimen." This was only throwing oil upon flame; the ninety-nine confederates were deadly enemies from the moment and no new babies were presented in competition for the second prize. Thereafter, I took good care to send in a written report and did not attempt to announce the prize in person.

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THE BUFFALO HUNT. — I attended the great Bunker Hill celebration, June 17, 1843, and heard Mr. Webster's oration. I found exhibiting near the monument, under an old canvas

¹⁸ A Barnumian adaptation of Gay's lines:

"Where yet was ever found a mother
Who'd give her booby for another?" [Ed.]



From a lithograph

"HUM-BUG"

A contemporary caricature.

FREE OF CHARGE

tent, a herd of calf buffaloes a year old. There were fifteen in number, and I purchased the lot for \$700. I had an idea in my head which, if I could carry it out, would make the buffaloes a profitable investment, and I was determined to try it. The animals were poor and remarkably docile, having been driven from the plains of the Great West. I had them brought to New York, and placed in a farmer's barn in New Jersey, near Hoboken. Mr. C. D. French, of whom I purchased them, understood throwing the lasso, and I hired him for \$30 per month to take care of the buffaloes, until such time as I had matured my plans.

Paragraphs were soon started in the papers announcing that a herd of wild buffaloes, caught by the lasso when quite young, were now on their way from the Rocky Mountains to Europe, *via* New York, in charge of the men who captured them. In a few days communications appeared in several papers, suggesting that if the buffaloes could be safely secured in some race course, and a regular buffalo chase given by their owners, showing the use of the lasso, etc., it would be a treat worth going many miles to see. One correspondent declared it would be worth a dollar to see it; another asserted that fifty thousand persons would gladly pay to witness it, etc. One suggested the Long Island Race Course; another thought a large plot of ground at Harlem, inclosed expressly for the purpose, would be better; and a third suggested Hoboken as just the place. In due time, the following advertisement appeared in the public prints, and handbills and posters of the same purport, illustrated by the following picture of wild buffaloes pursued by Indians on horseback,¹⁹ were simultaneously circulated, far and near, with a liberal hand:

“Grand Buffalo Hunt, Free of Charge. — At Hoboken, on Thursday, August 31, at 3, 4, and 5 o'clock P. M.  Mr. C. D. French, one of the most daring and experienced hunters of the West, has arrived

¹⁹ This cut, given in the 1855 “Life,” has been omitted from the present edition. [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

thus far on his way to Europe, with a Herd of Buffaloes, captured by himself, near Santa Fé. He will exhibit the method of hunting the Wild Buffaloes, and throwing the lasso, by which the animals were captured in their most wild and untamed state. This is perhaps one of the most exciting and difficult feats that can be performed, requiring at the same time the most expert horsemanship and the greatest skill and dexterity. Every man, woman, and child can here witness *the wild sports of the Western Prairies*, as the exhibition is to be free to all, and will take place on the extensive grounds and Race Course of the Messrs. Stevens, within a few rods of the Hoboken Ferry, where at least fifty thousand ladies and gentlemen can conveniently witness the interesting sport. The Grand Chase will be repeated at three distinct hours. At 3 o'clock P. M., from twelve to twenty Buffaloes will be turned loose, and Mr. French will appear dressed as an Indian, mounted on a Prairie Horse and Mexican saddle, chase the Buffaloes around the Race Course, and capture one with the lasso. At 4 and 5 o'clock, the race will be repeated, and the intervals of time will be occupied with various other sports. The City Brass Band is engaged.

"No possible danger need be apprehended, as a double railing has been put around the whole course, to prevent the possibility of the Buffaloes approaching the multitude. Extra ferry-boats will be provided, to run from Barclay, Canal, and Christopher streets. If the weather should be stormy, the sport will come off at the same hours the first fair day."

The mystery of a free exhibition of the sort, though not understood at the time, is readily explained. I had engaged all the ferry-boats to Hoboken, at a stipulated price, and all the receipts on the day specified were to be mine.

The assurance that no danger need be apprehended from the buffaloes was simply ridiculous. The poor creatures were so weak and tame that it was doubtful whether they would run at all, notwithstanding my man French had been cramming them with oats to get a little extra life into them.

The eventful day arrived. Taking time by the forelock, multitudes of people crossed to Hoboken before ten o'clock,

SCRAMBLING AWAY

and by noon the ferry-boats were constantly crowded to their utmost capacity. An extra boat, the "Passaic," was put on, and the rush of passengers continued until five o'clock. Twenty-four thousand persons went by the ferry-boats to Hoboken that day. Each paid six and a quarter cents going, and as much returning, and the aggregate receipts, including the ferriage of carts and carriages, and the hire for refreshment-stands on the ground, were \$3500. Many thousand persons were present from various parts of New Jersey, and these, though bringing "grist to my mill," of course escaped my "toll" at the ferries.

The band of music engaged for the occasion did its best to amuse the immense crowd until three o'clock. At precisely that hour the buffaloes emerged from a shed in the centre of the inclosure — my man French having previously administered a punching with a sharp stick, hoping to excite them to a trot on their first appearance. He immediately followed them, painted and dressed as an Indian, mounted on a fiery steed, with lasso in one hand and a sharp stick in the other, but the poor little calves huddled together, and refused to move! This scene was so wholly unexpected and so perfectly ludicrous, that the spectators burst into uncontrollable uproarious laughter. The shouting somewhat startled the buffaloes, and, goaded by French and his assistants, they started off in a slow trot. The uproar of merriment was renewed, and the multitude swinging their hats and hallooing in wild disorder, the buffaloes broke into a gallop, ran against a panel of the low fence (consisting of two narrow boards), tumbled over, and scrambled away as fast as they could. The crowd in that quarter offered no obstruction. Seeing the animals approach, and not being sufficiently near to discover how harmless they were, men, women, and children scattered pell-mell! Such a scampering I never saw before. The buffaloes, which were as badly frightened as the people, found shelter in a neighboring swamp, and all efforts to disengage them proved ineffectual. French, however, captured one of them with his lasso, and afterwards amused

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

the people by lassoing horses and riders — and good-humor prevailed.

No one seemed to suspect the ferry-boat arrangement — the projector was *incog.* — the exhibition had been free to the public — there had been much amusement for twelve and a half cents each, and no one complained. It was, however, nearly midnight before all the visitors found ferry accommodations to New York.

N. P. Willis, of the "Home Journal," wrote an article illustrating the perfect good-nature with which the American public submits to a clever humbug. He said that he went to Hoboken to witness the Buffalo Hunt. It was nearly four o'clock when the boat left the foot of Barclay street, yet it was so densely crowded that many persons were obliged to stand upon the railings and hold on to the awning posts. When they reached the Hoboken side, a boat equally crowded was leaving that wharf. The passengers of the boat just arriving cried out to those in the boat just returning, "Is the Buffalo Hunt over?" To which came the reply, "Yes, and it was the biggest humbug you ever heard of!" Willis added, that the passengers on the boat with him were so delighted that they instantly gave three cheers for the author of the humbug, whoever he might be.

The day after the chase at Hoboken, I met my friend Frederick West, of the "Sunday Atlas," who was not in the secret. "That French," said he, "is almost as great a humbug as *you* are." Thanking him for the honorable exception, I told him that I had been much amused at witnessing the scene. "What amused me the most," said I, "was to see the people running and screeching with fear, when the little harmless calves broke through the fence and were scampering for the swamp."

"Where were you at the time?" asked West.

"Near the building, at the starting-point," I replied.

"Well," answered West, with a smile of discontent, "as I happened to be among the party that fled in affright, I don't see the fun of the thing as *you* do!"

GRATUITOUS ADVERTISING

The same experiment was subsequently tried successfully at Camden, N. Y., opposite Philadelphia; after which a number of the buffaloes were sent to England and sold, and the rest were fattened and disposed of in steaks in Fulton Market at fifty cents per pound.

It is but justice to myself to remind the reader that, at the time of their occurrence, the public did not suspect that I had any connection whatever with the exhibition of the Woolly Horse, or the herd of buffaloes. The entire facts in these cases came to light only through my own voluntary admissions.

After the public had enjoyed a laugh for several days over the Hoboken "Free Grand Buffalo Hunt," I permitted it to be announced that the proprietor of the American Museum was responsible for the joke, thus using the buffalo hunt as a skyrocket to attract public attention to my Museum. The object was accomplished and although some people cried out "humbug," I had added to the notoriety which I so much wanted and I was satisfied. As for the cry of "humbug," it never harmed me, and I was in the position of the actor who had much rather be roundly abused than not to be noticed at all. I ought to add that the forty-eight thousand sixpences — the usual fare — received for ferry fares, less what I paid for the charter of the boats on that one day, more than remunerated me for the cost of the buffaloes and the expenses of the "hunt," and the enormous gratuitous advertising of the Museum must also be placed to my credit.

THE WOOLLY HORSE. — In the summer of 1848, while in Cincinnati with General Tom Thumb, my attention was arrested by handbills announcing the exhibition of a "woolly horse." Being always on the *qui vive* for everything curious with which to amuse or astonish the public, I visited the exhibition, and found the animal to be a veritable curiosity. It was a well-formed horse of rather small size, without any mane or the slightest portion of hair upon his tail. The entire body and limbs were covered with a thick fine hair or wool

curling tight to his skin. He was foaled in Indiana, was a mere freak of nature, and withal a very curious-looking animal. I purchased him and sent him to Bridgeport, Ct., where he was placed quietly away in a retired barn, until such time as I might have use for him.

I had not the remotest idea, when I bought this horse, what I should do with him; but when the news came that Colonel John C. Frémont (who was supposed to have been lost in the snows of the Rocky Mountains) was in safety, the "Woolly Horse" was exhibited in New York, and was widely advertised as a most remarkable animal that had been captured by the great explorer's party in the passes of the Rocky Mountains.²⁰ The exhibition met with only moderate success in New York, and in several Northern provincial towns, and the show would have fallen flat in Washington, had it not been for the overzeal of Colonel Thomas H. Benton, then a United States senator from Missouri. He went to the show, and then caused the arrest of my agent for obtaining twenty-five cents from him under "false pretences." No mention had been made of this curious animal in any letter he had received from his son-in-law, Colonel John C. Frémont, and therefore the "Woolly Horse" had not been captured by any of Frémont's party. The reasoning was hardly as sound as were most of the arguments of "Old Bullion," and the case was dismissed. After a few

²⁰ The advertisement in the New York papers read thus:

"Col. Frémont's Nondescript or Woolly Horse will be exhibited for a few days at the corner of Broadway and Reade street, previous to his departure for London. Nature seems to have exerted all her ingenuity in the production of this astounding animal. He is extremely complex — made up of the Elephant, Deer, Horse, Buffalo, Camel, and Sheep. It is the full size of a Horse, has the haunches of the Deer, the tail of the Elephant, a fine curled wool of camel's hair color, and easily bounds twelve or fifteen feet high. Naturalists and the oldest trappers assured Col. Frémont that it was never known previous to his discovery. It is undoubtedly 'Nature's last,' and the richest specimen received from California. To be seen every day this week. Admittance 25 cents; children half price."

Handbills and posters depicted the "Nondescript" in flight, pursued by the Colonel and his "hardy handful of soldiers." Barnum admitted (in the 1855 "Life") that the animal, had it actually made the leap there represented, "would have jumped not less than five miles." [Ed.]

ARRESTING ATTENTION

days of merriment, public curiosity no longer turned in that direction, and the old horse was permitted to retire to private life. My object in the exhibition, however, was fully attained. When it was generally known that the proprietor of the American Museum was also the owner of the famous "Woolly Horse," it caused yet more talk about me and my establishment, and visitors began to say that they would give more to see the proprietor of the Museum than to view the entire collection of curiosities. As for my ruse in advertising the "Woolly Horse" as having been captured by Frémont's exploring party, of course the announcement neither added to nor took from the interest of the exhibition; but it arrested public attention, and it was the only feature of the show that I now care to forget.

It will be seen that very much of the success which attended my many years' proprietorship of the American Museum was due to advertising, and especially to my odd methods of advertising. Always claiming that I had curiosities worth showing and worth seeing, and exhibited "dog cheap" at "twenty-five cents admission, children half price" — I studied ways to arrest public attention; to startle, to make people talk and wonder; in short, to let the world know that I had a Museum.

About this time, I engaged a band of Indians from Iowa. They had never seen a railroad or steamboat until they saw them on the route from Iowa to New York. Of course they were wild and had but faint ideas of civilization. The party comprised large and noble specimens of the untutored savage, as well as several very beautiful squaws, with two or three interesting "papooses." They lived and lodged in a large room on the top floor of the Museum, and cooked their own victuals in their own way. They gave their war-dances on the stage in the Lecture Room with great vigor and enthusiasm, much to the satisfaction of the audiences. But these wild Indians seemed to consider their dances as realities. Hence when they gave a real War Dance, it was dangerous for any parties, except their manager and interpreter, to be on the stage, for the moment

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

they had finished their war dance, they began to leap and peer about behind the scenes in search of victims for their tomahawks and scalping knives! Indeed, lest in these frenzied moments they might make a dash at the orchestra or the audience, we had a high rope barrier placed between them and the savages on the front of the stage.

After they had been a week in the Museum, I proposed a change of performance for the week following, by introducing new dances. Among these was the Indian Wedding Dance. At that time I printed but one set of posters (large bills) per week, so that whatever was announced for Monday, was repeated every day and evening during that week. Before the Wedding Dance came off on Monday afternoon, I was informed that I was to provide a large new red woollen blanket, at a cost of ten dollars, for the bridegroom to present to the father of the bride. I ordered the purchase to be made; but was considerably taken aback, when I was informed that I must have another new blanket for the evening, inasmuch as the savage old Indian chief, father-in-law to the bridegroom, would not consent to his daughter's being approached with the Wedding Dance unless he had his blanket present.

I undertook to explain to the chief, through the interpreter, that this was only a "make believe" wedding; but the old savage shrugged his shoulders, and gave such a terrific "Ugh!" that I was glad to make my peace by ordering another blanket. As we gave two performances per day, I was out of pocket \$120 for twelve "wedding blankets," that week.

One of the beautiful squaws named Do-humme died in the Museum. She had been a great favorite with many ladies, — among whom I can especially name Mrs. C. M. Sawyer, wife of the Rev. Dr. T. J. Sawyer. Do-humme was buried on the border of Sylvan Water, at Greenwood Cemetery, where a small monument, erected by her friends, designates her last resting place.²¹

²¹ Near the northwest corner of Sylvan Lake, on a hillock called Indian Mound. A picture of it and an account of Dohumme may be found in Nehemiah

“ IS THIS MR. BARNUM? ”

The poor Indians were very sorrowful for many days, and desired to get back again to their western wilds. The father and the betrothed of Do-humme cooked various dishes of food and placed them upon the roof of the Museum, where they believed the spirit of their departed friend came daily for its supply; and these dishes were renewed every morning during the stay of the Indians at the Museum.

It was sometimes very amusing to hear the remarks of strangers who came to visit my Museum. One afternoon a prim maiden lady from Portland, Maine, walked into my private office, where I was busily engaged in writing; and taking a seat on the sofa, she asked:

“ Is this Mr. Barnum? ”

“ It is,” I replied.

“ Is this Mr. P. T. Barnum, the proprietor of the Museum? ” she asked.

“ The same,” was my answer.

“ Why, really, Mr. Barnum,” she continued, “ you look much like other common folks, after all.”

I remarked that I presumed I did; but I could not help it, and I hoped she was not disappointed at my appearance.

“ Oh, no,” she said; “ I suppose I have no right to be disappointed, but I have read and heard so much about you and your Museum that I was quite prepared to be astonished.”

I asked her if she had been through the establishment.

“ I have,” she replied; “ I came in immediately after breakfast; I have been here ever since, and I can say, I think, with the Queen of Sheba, that ‘ the half had not been told me.’ But, Mr. Barnum,” she continued, “ I have long felt a desire to see you; I wanted to attend when you lectured on temperance in Portland, but I had a severe cold and could not go out.”

“ Do you like my collection as well as you do the one in the Boston Museum? ” I asked.

Cleaveland's "Greenwood: A Directory for Visitors." Thomas J. Sawyer was pastor of the Orchard-street Universalist Church, New York. [Ed.]

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"Dear me! Mr. Barnum," said she, "I never went to any museum before, nor to any place of amusement or public entertainment, excepting our school exhibitions; and I have sometimes felt that they even may be wicked, for some parts of the dialogues seemed frivolous; but I have heard so much of your 'moral drama' and the great good you are doing for the rising generation that I thought I must come here and see for myself."

"We represent the pathetic story of 'Charlotte Temple' in the Lecture Room to-day," I remarked, with an inward chuckle at the peculiarities of my singular visitor, who, although she was nearly fifty years of age, had probably never been in an audience of a hundred persons, unless it might be at a school exhibition, or in Sunday school or in church.

"Indeed! I am quite familiar with the sad history of Miss Temple, and I think I can derive great consolation from witnessing the representation of the touching story."²²

At this moment the gong sounded to announce the opening of the Lecture Room, and the crowd passed on in haste to secure seats. My spinster visitor sprang to her feet and anxiously inquired:

"Are the services about to commence?"

"Yes," I replied, "the congregation is now going up."

She marched along with the crowd as demurely as if she was going to a funeral. After she was seated, I watched her, and in the course of the play I noticed that she was several times so much overcome as to be moved to tears. She was very much affected, and when the "services" were over, without seeking another interview with me, she went silently and tearfully away.

²² Susanna Rowson's story "Charlotte Temple; or, a Tale of Truth" (1790) was widely circulated in cheap reprints. In the days of the American Museum, a familiar object of interest was a grave with a headstone marked "Charlotte Temple" in Trinity churchyard. Stone and grave are still to be found there, though few readers are now "familiar with the sad history" of Mrs. Rowson's heroine (whose real name, by the way, is said to have been Stanley). A dramatization of "the touching story" would be appropriate to Barnum's programme of "Moral Drama." [Ed.]

A SUMMING-UP

One day, two city boys who had thoroughly explored the wonders of the Museum, on their way out passed the open door of my private office, and seeing me sitting there, one of them exclaimed to his companion:

"There! That's Mr. Barnum."

"No! is it?" asked the other, and then with his mind full of the glories of the stuffed gander-skins, and other wealth which had been displayed to his wondering eyes in the establishment, he summed up his views of the vastness and value of the whole collection and its fortunate proprietor in a single sentence:

"Well, he's an awful rich old cuss, ain't he!"

Those boys evidently took a strictly financial view of the establishment.

CHAPTER X

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL SPECULATION

Peale's Museum — Mysterious Mesmerism — Yankee Hill — Henry Bennett — The Rival Museums — The Orphean and Orphan Families — The Fudgee Mermaid — Buying Out My Rival — Running Opposition to Myself — Abolishing Theatrical Nuisances — No Checks and No Bar — The Museum My Mania — My First Interview with Charles S. Stratton — General Tom Thumb in New York — Re-engagement — An Apt Pupil — Free from Debt — The Profits of Two Years — In Search of a New Field — Starting for Liverpool — The Good Ship "Yorkshire" — My Party — Escort to Sandy Hook — The Voyage — Arrival at Liverpool — A Gentleman Beggar — Madame Céleste — Cheap Dwarfs — Two-Penny Shows — Exhibition of General Tom Thumb in Liverpool — First-Class Engagement for London.

THE president and directors of the "New York Museum Company" not only failed to buy the American Museum as they confidently expected to do, but, after my newspaper squib war and my purchase of the Museum, they found it utterly impossible to sell their stock. By some arrangement, the particulars of which I do not remember, if, indeed, I ever cared to know them, Mr. Peale was conducting Peale's Museum, which he claimed was a more "scientific" establishment than mine, and he pretended to appeal to a higher class of patrons. Mesmerism was one of his scientific attractions, and he had a subject upon whom he operated at times with the greatest seeming success, and fairly astonished his audiences. But there were times when the subject was wholly unimpressible and then those who had paid their money to see the woman put into the mesmeric state cried out "humbug" and the reputation of the establishment seriously suffered.

It devolved upon me to open a rival mesmeric performance, and accordingly I engaged a bright little girl who was exceed-

“IN THE SAME STATE”

ingly susceptible to such mesmeric influences as I could induce. That is, she learned her lesson thoroughly, and when I had apparently put her to sleep with a few passes and stood behind her, she seemed to be duly “impressed” as I desired; raised her hands as I willed; fell from her chair to the floor; and if I put candy or tobacco into my mouth, she was duly delighted or disgusted. She never failed in these routine performances. Strange to say, believers in mesmerism used to witness her performances with the greatest pleasure and adduce them as positive proofs that there was something in mesmerism, and they applauded tremendously — up to a certain point.

That point was reached, when leaving the girl “asleep,” I called up some one in the audience, promising to put him “in the same state” within five minutes, or forfeit fifty dollars. Of course, all my “passes” would not put my man in the mesmeric state; at the end of three minutes he was as wide awake as ever.

“Never mind,” I would say, looking at my watch; “I have two minutes more, and meantime, to show that a person in this state is utterly insensible to pain, I propose to cut off one of the fingers of the little girl who is still asleep.” I would then take out my knife and feel of the edge, and when I turned around to the girl whom I left on the chair she had fled behind the scenes to the intense amusement of the greater part of the audience and to the amazement of the mesmerists who were present.

“Why! where’s my little girl?” I asked with feigned astonishment.

“Oh! she ran away when you began to talk about cutting off fingers.”

“Then she was wide awake, was she?”

“Of course she was, all the time.”

“I suppose so; and, my dear sir, I promised that you should be ‘in the same state’ at the end of five minutes, and as I believe you are so, I do not forfeit fifty dollars.”

I kept up this performance for several weeks, till I quite killed Peale’s “genuine” mesmerism in the rival establish-

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ment. After Peale, "Yankee" Hill undertook the management of that Museum, but in a little while he failed. It was then let to Henry Bennett, who reduced the entrance price to one shilling, — a half price which led me to characterize his concern as "cheap and nasty," — and he began a serious rivalry with my Museum. His main reliances were burlesques and caricatures of whatever novelties I was exhibiting; thus, when I advertised an able company of vocalists, well-known as the Orphean Family, Bennett announced the "Orphan Family"; my Fejee Mermaid he offset with a figure made of a monkey and codfish joined together and called the "Fudgee Mermaid." These things created some laughter at my expense, but they also served to advertise my Museum.

When the novelty of this opposition died away, Bennett did a decidedly losing business. I used to send a man with a shilling to his place every night and I knew exactly how much he was doing and what were his receipts. The holidays were coming and might tide him over a day or two, but he was at the very bottom and I said to him, one day:

"Bennett, if you can keep open one week after New Year's I will give you a hundred dollars."

He made every effort to win the money, and even went to the landlord and offered him the entire receipts for a week if he would only let him stay there; but he would not do it, and the day after New Year's, January 2, 1843, Bennett shut up shop, having lost his last dollar and even failing to secure the handsome premium I offered him.

The entire collection fell into the hands of the landlord for arrearages of rent, and I privately purchased it for \$7,000 cash, hired the building, and secretly engaged Bennett as my agent. We ran a very spirited opposition for a long time and abused each other terribly in public. It was very amusing when actors and performers failed to make terms with one of us and went to the other, carrying from one to the other the price each was willing to pay for an engagement. We thus used to hear extraordinary stories about each other's "liberal

“ A PAIR OF SHEARS ”

terms,” but between the two we managed to secure such persons as we wanted at about the rates at which their services were really worth. While these people were thus running from one manager to the other, supposing we were rivals, Bennett said to me one day:

“ You and I are like a pair of shears; we seem to cut each other, but we only cut what comes between.”

I ran my opposition long enough to beat myself. It answered every purpose, however, in awakening public attention to my Museum, and was an advantage in preventing others from starting a genuine opposition. At the end of six months, the whole establishment, including the splendid gallery of American portraits, was removed to the American Museum and I immediately advertised the great card of a “double attraction” and “Two Museums in One” without extra charge.

A museum proper obviously depends for patronage largely upon country people who visit the city with a worthy curiosity to see the novelties of the town. As I had opened a dramatic entertainment in connection with my curiosities, it was clear that I must adapt my stage to the wants of my country customers. While I was disposed to amuse my provincial patrons, I was determined that there should be nothing in my establishment, where many of my visitors would derive their first impressions of city life, that could contaminate or corrupt them. At this period, it was customary to tolerate very considerable license on the stage. Things were said and done and permitted in theatres that elsewhere would have been pronounced highly improper. The public seemed to demand these things, and it is an axiom in political economy, that the demand must regulate the supply. But I determined, at the start, that, let the demand be what it might, the Museum dramatic entertainments should be unexceptionable on the score of morality.

I have already mentioned some of the immediate reforms I made in the abuses of the stage. I went farther, and, at the risk of some pecuniary sacrifice, I abolished what was common

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enough in other theatres, even the most "respectable," and was generally known as the "third tier." Nor was a bar permitted on my premises. To be sure, I had no power to prevent my patrons from going out between the acts and getting liquor if they chose to do so, and I gave checks, as is done in other theatres, and some of my city customers availed themselves of the opportunity to go out for drinks and return again. Practically, then, it was much the same as if I had kept a bar in the Museum, and so I abolished the check business. There was great reason to apprehend that such a course would rob me of the patronage of a considerable class of play-goers, but I rigidly adhered to the new rule, and what I may have lost in money, I more than gained in the greater decorum which characterized my audiences.

The Museum became a mania with me and I made everything possible subservient to it. On the eve of elections, rival politicians would ask me for whom I was going to vote, and my answer invariably was, "I vote for the American Museum." In fact, at that time, I cared very little about politics, and a great deal about my business. Meanwhile the Museum prospered wonderfully, and everything I attempted or engaged in seemed at the outset an assured success.

The giants whom I exhibited from time to time were always literally great features in my establishment, and they oftentimes afforded me, as well as my patrons, food for much amusement as well as wonder. The Quaker giant, Hales,¹ was quite a wag in his way. He went once to see the new house of an acquaintance who had suddenly become rich, but who was a very ignorant man. When he came back he described the wonders of the mansion and said that the proud proprietor showed him

¹ Robert Hales (b. 1820), the "Norfolk giant," was in America from December 1848 to January 1851 and attracted considerable interest. He was seven and one-half feet in height; measured three feet across the shoulders; and weighed 462 pounds. The booklet "Sights and Wonders in New York," used to advertise the Museum, contains a woodcut of the "Marriage of Mr. Robert Hales and Miss Eliza Simpson, the Quaker Giant and Giantess, as it occurred on the Stage of the American Museum, Feb. 17, 1849." [Ed.]

GIGANTIC COMBATANTS

everything from basement to attic; parlors, bed-rooms, dining-room, and, said Hales, "what he called his 'study'—meaning, I suppose, the place where he intends to study his spelling-book!"

I had at one time two famous men, the French giant, M. Bihin, a very slim man, and the Arabian giant, Colonel Goshen.² These men generally got on together very well, though, of course, each was jealous of the other, and of the attention the rival received, or the notice he attracted. One day they quarrelled, and a lively interchange of compliments ensued, the Arabian calling the Frenchman a "shanghai," and receiving in return the epithet of "nigger."³ From words both were eager to proceed to blows, and both ran to my collection of arms; one seizing the club with which Captain Cook or any other man might have been killed, if it were judiciously wielded, and the other laying hands on a sword of the terrific size which is supposed to have been conventional in the days of the Crusades. The preparations for a deadly encounter, and the high words of the contending parties brought a dozen of the Museum *attachés* to the spot, and these men threw themselves between the gigantic combatants. Hearing the disturbance, I ran from my private office to the duelling-ground, and said:

"Look here! This is all right; if you want to fight each other, maiming and perhaps killing one or both of you, that is your affair; but my interest lies here—you are both under engagement to me, and if this duel is to come off, I and the public have a right to participate. It must be duly advertised, and must take place on the stage of the Lecture Room.

² Colonel Goshen was likewise styled "the Palestine giant." In 1879 (when he was said to be forty-three) he was officially described as seven feet, eleven inches in height and 620 pounds in weight. Sherwood, who knew him and calls him "Colonel Routh Goshan," says that he was born in Jerusalem in 1837 (d. 1887), weighed 590 pounds, and was fully eight feet, two inches in his stocking feet ("the greatest giant of record"). [Ed.]

³ Coup, in his "Sawdust and Spangles" (p. 51), says Goshin (as he spells the name) was "a negro picked up by 'Yank Robinson' in Kentucky." [Ed.]

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No performance of yours would be a greater attraction, and if you kill each other, our engagement can end with your duel."

This proposition, made in apparent earnest, so delighted the giants that they at once burst into a laugh, shook hands, and quarrelled no more.

I now come to the details of one of the most interesting, as well as successful, of all the show enterprises in which I have engaged—one which not only taxed all my ingenuity and industry, but which gave unqualified delight to thousands of people on two continents and put enormous sums of money into many pockets besides my own.

In November, 1842, I was in Albany on business, and as the Hudson River was frozen over, I returned to New York by the Housatonic Railroad, stopping one night at Bridgeport, Connecticut, with my brother, Philo F. Barnum, who at that time kept the Franklin Hotel. I had heard of a remarkably small child in Bridgeport, and, at my request, my brother brought him to the hotel. He was not two feet high; he weighed less than sixteen pounds, and was the smallest child I ever saw that could walk alone; but he was a perfectly formed, bright-eyed little fellow, with light hair and ruddy cheeks, and he enjoyed the best of health. He was exceedingly bashful, but after some coaxing he was induced to talk with me, and he told me that he was the son of Sherwood E. Stratton, and that his own name was Charles S. Stratton. After seeing him and talking with him, I at once determined to secure his services from his parents and to exhibit him in public.

But as he was only five years of age, to exhibit him as a "dwarf" might provoke the inquiry "How do you know he is a dwarf?" Some liberty might be taken with the facts, but even with this license, I felt that the venture was only an experiment, and I engaged him for four weeks at three dollars a week, with all travelling and boarding charges for himself and his mother at my expense. They came to New York, Thanksgiving day, December 8, 1842, and Mrs. Stratton was

RAPID PROGRESS

greatly surprised to see her son announced on my Museum bills as "General Tom Thumb."⁴

I took the greatest pains to educate and train my diminutive prodigy, devoting many hours to the task by day and by night, and I was very successful, for he was an apt pupil with a great deal of native talent, and a keen sense of the ludicrous. He made rapid progress in preparing himself for such performances as I wished him to undertake and he became very much attached to his teacher.

When the four weeks expired, I re-engaged him for one year at seven dollars a week, with a gratuity of fifty dollars at the end of the engagement, and the privilege of exhibiting him anywhere in the United States, in which event his parents were to accompany him and I was to pay all travelling expenses. He speedily became a public favorite, and, long before the year was out, I voluntarily increased his weekly salary to twenty-five dollars, and he fairly earned it. Sometimes I exhibited him for several weeks in succession at the Museum, and

⁴ Has it not been asserted that *suppressio veri* is equivalent to *suggestio falsi*? In the 1855 "Life," Barnum frankly stated that the "General" was heralded as "a dwarf of eleven years of age, just arrived from England." This must have been news to Mrs. Stratton, and more of an occasion for surprise than was the military title. After acknowledging the "two deceptions," the author of them continued; "I shall not attempt to justify them, but may be allowed to plead the circumstances in extenuation. The boy was undoubtedly a dwarf, and I had the most reliable evidence that he had grown little, if any, since he was six months old; but had I announced him as only five years of age, it would have been impossible to excite the interest or awaken the curiosity of the public. The thing I aimed at was, to assure them that he was *really a dwarf* — and in *this*, at least, they were not deceived.

"It was of no consequence, in reality, where he was born or where he came from, and if the announcement that he was *a foreigner* answered my purpose, the people had only themselves to blame if they did not get their money's worth when they visited the exhibition. I had observed (and sometimes, as in the case of Vivalla, had taken advantage of) the American fancy for European exotics; and if the deception, practised for a season in my dwarf experiment, has done any thing towards checking our disgraceful preference for foreigners, I may readily be pardoned for the offence I here acknowledge."

The governor of New York had annually — beginning with 1817 — appointed a day of thanksgiving. Lincoln set the precedent for a national proclamation fixing the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day. [Ed.]

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when I wished to introduce other novelties I sent him to different towns and cities, accompanied by my friend Mr. Fordyce Hitchcock, and the fame of General Tom Thumb soon spread throughout the country.

Two years had now elapsed since I bought the Museum and I had long since paid for the entire establishment from the profits; I had bought out my only rival; I was free from debt, and had a handsome surplus in the treasury. The business had long ceased to be an experiment; it was an established success and was in such perfect running order, that it could safely be committed to the management of trustworthy and tried agents.

Accordingly, looking for a new field for my individual efforts, I entered into an agreement for General Tom Thumb's services for another year, at fifty dollars a week and all expenses, with the privilege of exhibiting him in Europe. I proposed to test the curiosity of men and women on the other side of the Atlantic. Much as I hoped for success, in my most sanguine moods, I could not anticipate the half of what was in store for me; I did not foresee nor dream that I was shortly to be brought in close contact with kings, queens, lords, and illustrious commoners, and that such association, by means of my exhibition, would afterwards introduce me to the great public and the public's money, which was to fill my coffers. Or, if I saw some such future, it was dreamily, dimly, and with half-opened eyes, as the man saw the "trees walking."

After arranging my business affairs for a long absence, and making every preparation for an extended foreign tour, on Thursday, January 18, 1844, I went on board the new and fine sailing ship "Yorkshire," Captain D. G. Bailey, bound for Liverpool. Our party included General Tom Thumb, his parents, his tutor, and Professor Guillaudeu, the French naturalist. We were accompanied by several personal friends, and the City Brass Band kindly volunteered to escort us to Sandy Hook.

My name has been so long associated with mirthful incidents that I presume many persons do not suppose I am susceptible

SERIOUS THOUGHT

of sorrowful, or even sentimental emotions; but when the bell of the steamer that towed our ship down the bay announced the hour of separation, and then followed the hastily-spoken words of farewell, and the parting grasp of friendly hands, I confess that I was very much in the "melting mood," and when the band played "Home, Sweet Home," I was moved to tears.

No doubt my natural bias is to merriment, and I have encouraged my inclination to "comedy," because enough of "tragedy" will force itself upon the attention of every one in spite of his efforts to the contrary; yet I should be either more or less than human, were I incapable of serious thought, or did I not frequently indulge in the sober meditation which becomes the solemn realities of life.

I do not now refer only to scenes of parting with friends, or of leaving country and home for a few months, or even years, but I speak of the ordinary occasions of experience. I have had, and hope always to have, my seasons of loneliness and even sadness; and, though many people may not see how my profession of "a showman" can be made to appear consistent with my profession of another kind, I must claim having always revered the Christian Religion. I have been indebted to Christianity for the most serene happiness of my life, and I would not part with its consolations for all things else in the world. In all my journeys as "a showman," the Bible has been my companion, and I have repeatedly read it attentively, from beginning to end. Whether I have or have not been profited by its precepts, is a question not here to be considered; but the scriptural doctrine of the government of God and its happy issue in the life to come, has been my chief solace in affliction and sorrow, and I hope always to cherish it as my greatest treasure.

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Occasional calms and adverse winds protracted our passage to nineteen days, but a better ship and a more competent captain never sailed. I was entirely exempt from sea-sickness,

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

and enjoyed the voyage very much. Good fellowship prevailed among the passengers, the time passed rapidly, and we had a good deal of fun on board.

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On our arrival at Liverpool, quite a crowd had assembled at the dock to see Tom Thumb, for it had been previously announced that he would arrive in the "Yorkshire," but his mother managed to smuggle him ashore unnoticed, for she carried him, as if he was an infant, in her arms. We went to the Waterloo Hotel, and, after an excellent dinner, walked out to take a look at the town. While I was viewing the Nelson monument a venerable-looking, well-dressed old gentleman volunteered to explain to me the different devices and inscriptions. I looked upon him as a disinterested and attentive man of means who was anxious to assist a stranger and to show his courtesy; but when I gave him a parting bow of thanks, half ashamed that I had so trespassed on his kindness, he put out the hand of a beggar and said that he would be thankful for any remuneration I saw fit to bestow upon him for his trouble. I was certainly astonished, and I thrust a shilling into his hand and walked rapidly away.

In the evening of the same day, a tall, raw-boned man came to the hotel and introduced himself to me as a brother Yankee, who would be happy in pointing out the many wonders in Liverpool that a stranger would be pleased to see.

I asked him how long he had been in Liverpool, and he replied, "Nearly a week." I declined his proffered services abruptly, remarking that if he had been there only a week, I probably knew as much about England as he did.

"Oh," said he, "you are mistaken. I have been in England before, though never till recently in Liverpool."

"What part of England?" I inquired.

"Opposite Niagara Falls," he replied. "I spent several days there with the British soldiers."

A PRIVATE BOX

I laughed in his face, and reminded him that England did not lie opposite Niagara Falls. The impudent fellow was confused for a moment and then triumphantly exclaimed:

"I didn't mean England. I know what country it is as well as you do."

"Well, what country is it?" I asked, quite assured that he did not know.

"Great Britain, of course," he replied.

It is needless to add that the honor of his company as a guide in Liverpool was declined, and he went off apparently in a huff because his abilities were not appreciated.

Later in the evening, the proprietor of a cheap wax-works show, at three ha'pence admission, called upon me. He had heard of the arrival of the great American curiosity, and he seized the earliest opportunity to make the General and myself the magnificent offer of ten dollars a week if we would join ourselves to his already remarkable and attractive exhibition. I could not but think that dwarfs must be literally at a "low figure" in England, and my prospects were gloomy indeed. I was a stranger in the land; my letters of introduction had not been delivered; beyond my own little circle, I had not seen a friendly face, nor heard a familiar voice. I was "blue," homesick, almost in despair. Next morning, there came a ray of sunshine in the following note:

Madame Céleste ⁵ presents her compliments to Mr. Barnum, and begs to say that her private box is quite at his service, any night, for himself and friends.

Theatre Royal, Williamson Square.

This polite invitation was thankfully accepted, and we went to the theatre that evening. Our party, including the General, who was partly concealed by his tutor's cloak, occupied Céleste's box, and in the box adjoining sat an English lady and

⁵ It was in New York in 1827 that Madame Céleste had made her professional beginning, and in 1834-1837 she was again in the United States. [Ed.]

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gentleman whose appearance indicated respectability, intelligence, and wealth. The General's interest in the performance attracted their attention, and the lady remarked to me:

"What an intelligent-looking child you have! He appears to take quite an interest in the stage."

"Pardon me, madam," said I, "this is not a child. This is General Tom Thumb."

"Indeed!" they exclaimed. They had seen the announcements of our visit and were greatly gratified at an interview with the pigmy prodigy. They at once advised me in the most complimentary and urgent manner to take the General to Manchester, where they resided, assuring me that an exhibition in that place would be highly remunerative. I thanked my new friends for their counsel and encouragement, and ventured to ask them what price they would recommend me to charge for admission.

"The General is so decidedly a curiosity," said the lady, "that I think you might put it as high as tuppence [two-pence]!"

She was, however, promptly interrupted by her husband, who was evidently the economist of the family: "I am sure you would not succeed at that price," said he; "you should put admission at one penny, for that is the usual price for seeing giants and dwarfs in England."

This was worse than the ten dollars a week offer of the wax-works proprietor, but I promptly answered, "Never shall the price be less than one shilling sterling and some of the nobility and gentry of England will yet pay gold to see General Tom Thumb."

My letters of introduction speedily brought me into friendly relations with many excellent families and I was induced to hire a hall and present the General to the public, for a short season, in Liverpool. I had intended to proceed directly to London and begin operations at "head-quarters," that is, in Buckingham Palace, if possible; but I had been advised that the royal family was in mourning for the death of Prince Al-

“ TAKEN ALL ABACK ”

ert's father, and would not permit the approach of any entertainments.

Meanwhile confidential letters from London informed me that Mr. Maddox, Manager of Princess' Theatre, was coming down to witness my exhibition, with a view to making an engagement. He came privately, but I was fully informed as to his presence and object. A friend pointed him out to me in the hall, and when I stepped up to him, and called him by name, he was “taken all aback,” and avowed his purpose in visiting Liverpool. An interview resulted in an engagement of the General for three nights at Princess' Theatre. I was unwilling to contract for a longer period, and even this short engagement, though on liberal terms, was acceded to only as a means of advertisement. So soon, therefore, as I could bring my short, but highly successful season in Liverpool to a close, we went to London.

CHAPTER XI

GENERAL TOM THUMB IN ENGLAND

Arrival in London—The General's Début in the Princess' Theatre—Enormous Success—My Mansion at the West End—Daily Levees for the Nobility and Gentry—Hon. Edward Everett—His Interest in the General—Visit to the Baroness Rothschild—Opening in Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly—Mr. Charles Murray, Master of the Queen's Household—At Buckingham Palace by Command of Her Majesty—A Royal Reception—The Favorable Impression Made by the General—Amusing Incidents of the Visit—Backing Out—Fight with a Poodle—"Court Journal" Notice—Second Visit to the Queen—The Prince of Wales and Princess Royal—The Queen of the Belgians—Third Visit to Buckingham Palace—King Leopold, of Belgium—Assured Success—The British Public Excited—Egyptian Hall Crowded—Queen Dowager Adelaide—The General's Watch—Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington—Distinguished Friends.

IMMEDIATELY after our arrival in London, the General came out at the Princess' Theatre, and made so decided a "hit" that it was difficult to decide who was best pleased, the spectators, the manager, or myself. The spectators were delighted because they could not well help it; the manager was satisfied because he had coined money by the engagement; and I was greatly pleased because I now had a visible guaranty of success in London. I was offered far higher terms for a re-engagement, but my purpose had been already answered; the news was spread everywhere that General Tom Thumb, an unparalleled curiosity, was in the city; and it only remained for me to bring him before the public, on my own account and in my own time and way.

I took a furnished mansion in Grafton street, Bond street, West End, in the very centre of the most fashionable locality. The house had previously been occupied for several years by

A WELL-FILLED PURSE

Lord Talbot, and Lord Brougham and half a dozen families of the aristocracy and many of the gentry were my neighbors. From this magnificent mansion, I sent letters of invitation to the editors and several of the nobility, to visit the General. Most of them called, and were highly gratified. The word of approval was indeed so passed around in high circles that uninvited parties drove to my door in crested carriages, and were not admitted.

This procedure, though in some measure a stroke of policy, was neither singular nor hazardous, under the circumstances. I had not yet announced a public exhibition, and as a private American gentleman, it became me to maintain the dignity of my position. I therefore instructed my liveried servant to deny admission to see my "ward," excepting to persons who brought cards of invitation. He did it in a proper manner, and no offence could be taken, though I was always particular to send an invitation immediately to such as had not been admitted.

During our first week in London, the Hon. Edward Everett, the American Minister,¹ to whom I had letters of introduction, called and was highly pleased with his diminutive though renowned countryman. We dined with him the next day by invitation, and his family loaded the young American with presents. Mr. Everett kindly promised to use influence at the Palace in person, with a view to having Tom Thumb introduced to Her Majesty Queen Victoria.

A few evenings afterwards the Baroness Rothschild sent her carriage for us. Her mansion is a noble structure in Piccadilly, surrounded by a high wall, through the gate of which our carriage was driven, and brought up in front of the main entrance. Here we were received by half a dozen servants, and were ushered up the broad flight of marble stairs to the drawing-room, where we met the Baroness and a party of twenty or more ladies and gentlemen. In this sumptuous mansion of the richest banker in the world, we spent about two hours, and when we took our leave a well-filled purse was quietly slipped

¹ Everett was minister to England in 1841-1845. [Ed.]

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into my hand. The golden shower had begun to fall, and that it was no dream was manifest from the fact that, very shortly afterwards, a visit to the mansion of Mr. Drummond, another eminent banker, came to the same golden conclusion.

I now engaged the "Egyptian Hall," in Piccadilly, and the announcement of my unique exhibition was promptly answered by a rush of visitors, in which the wealth and fashion of London was liberally represented. I made these arrangements because I had little hope of being soon brought to the Queen's presence (for the reason before mentioned), but Mr. Everett's generous influence secured my object. I breakfasted at his house one morning, by invitation, in company with Mr. Charles Murray, an author of creditable repute, who held the office of Master of the Queen's Household. In the course of conversation, Mr. Murray inquired as to my plans, and I informed him that I intended going to the Continent shortly, though I should be glad to remain if the General could have an interview with the Queen — adding that such an event would be of great consequence to me.

Mr. Murray kindly offered his good offices in the case, and the next day one of the Life Guards, a tall, noble-looking fellow, bedecked as became his station, brought me a note, conveying the Queen's invitation to General Tom Thumb and his guardian, Mr. Barnum, to appear at Buckingham Palace on an evening specified. Special instructions were the same day orally given me by Mr. Murray, by Her Majesty's command, to suffer the General to appear before her, as he would appear anywhere else, without any training in the use of the titles of royalty, as the Queen desired to see him act naturally and without restraint.

Determined to make the most of the occasion, I put a placard on the door of the Egyptian Hall: "Closed this evening. General Tom Thumb being at Buckingham Palace by command of Her Majesty."

On arriving at the Palace, the Lord in Waiting put me "under drill" as to the manner and form in which I should

WITH A FIRM STEP

conduct myself in the presence of royalty. I was to answer all questions by Her Majesty through him, and in no event to speak directly to the Queen. In leaving the royal presence I was to "back out," keeping my face always towards Her Majesty, and the illustrious lord kindly gave me a specimen of that sort of backward locomotion. How far I profited by his instructions and example, will presently appear.

We were conducted through a long corridor to a broad flight of marble steps, which led to the Queen's magnificent picture gallery, where Her Majesty and Prince Albert, the Duchess of Kent, and twenty or thirty of the nobility were awaiting our arrival. They were standing at the farther end of the room when the doors were thrown open, and the General walked in, looking like a wax doll gifted with the power of locomotion. Surprise and pleasure were depicted on the countenances of the royal circle at beholding this remarkable specimen of humanity so much smaller than they had evidently expected to find him.

The General advanced with a firm step, and as he came within hailing distance made a very graceful bow, and exclaimed, "Good evening, ladies and gentlemen!"

A burst of laughter followed this salutation. The Queen then took him by the hand, led him about the gallery, and asked him many questions, the answers to which kept the party in an uninterrupted strain of merriment. The General familiarly informed the Queen that her picture gallery was "first-rate," and told her he should like to see the Prince of Wales. The Queen replied that the Prince had retired to rest, but that he should see him on some future occasion. The General then gave his songs, dances, and imitations, and after a conversation with Prince Albert and all present, which continued for more than an hour, we were permitted to depart.

Before describing the process and incidents of "backing out," I must acknowledge how sadly I broke through the counsel of the Lord in Waiting. While Prince Albert and others were engaged with the General, the Queen was gathering in-

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formation from me in regard to his history, etc. Two or three questions were put and answered through the process indicated in my drill. It was a roundabout way of doing business, not at all to my liking, and I suppose the Lord in Waiting was seriously shocked, if not outraged, when I entered directly into conversation with Her Majesty. She, however, seemed not disposed to check my boldness, for she immediately spoke directly to me in obtaining the information which she sought. I felt entirely at ease in her presence, and could not avoid contrasting her sensible and amiable manners with the stiffness and formality of upstart gentility at home or abroad.

The Queen was modestly attired in plain black, and wore no ornaments. Indeed, surrounded as she was by ladies arrayed in the highest style of magnificence, their dresses sparkling with diamonds, she was the last person whom a stranger would have pointed out in that circle as the Queen of England.

The Lord in Waiting was perhaps mollified toward me when he saw me following his illustrious example in retiring from the royal presence. He was accustomed to the process, and therefore was able to keep somewhat ahead (or rather aback) of me, but even *I* stepped rather fast for the other member of the retiring party. We had a considerable distance to travel in that long gallery before reaching the door, and whenever the General found he was losing ground, he turned around and ran a few steps, then resumed the position of "backing out," then turned around and ran, and so continued to alternate his methods of getting to the door, until the gallery fairly rang with the merriment of the royal spectators. It was really one of the richest scenes I ever saw; running, under the circumstances, was an offence sufficiently heinous to excite the indignation of the Queen's favorite poodle-dog, and he vented his displeasure by barking so sharply as to startle the General from his propriety. He, however, recovered immediately, and with his little cane commenced an attack on the poodle, and a funny fight ensued, which renewed and increased the merriment of the royal party.

GIVEN VERBATIM

This was near the door of exit. We had scarcely passed into the ante-room, when one of the Queen's attendants came to us with the expressed hope of Her Majesty that the General had sustained no damage—to which the Lord in Waiting playfully added, that in case of injury to so renowned a personage, he should fear a declaration of war by the United States!

The courtesies of the Palace were not yet exhausted, for we were escorted to an apartment in which refreshments had been provided for us. We did ample justice to the viands, though my mind was rather looking into the future than enjoying the present. I was anxious that the "Court Journal" of the ensuing day should contain more than a mere line in relation to the General's interview with the Queen, and, on inquiry, I learned that the gentleman who had charge of that feature in the daily papers was then in the Palace. He was sent for by my solicitation, and promptly acceded to my request for such a notice as would attract attention. He even generously desired me to give him an outline of what I sought, and I was pleased to see afterwards, that he had inserted my notice *verbatim*.

This notice of my visit to the Queen wonderfully increased the attraction of my exhibition and compelled me to obtain a more commodious hall for my exhibition. I accordingly removed to the larger room in the same building, for some time previously occupied by our countryman, Mr. Catlin,² for his great Gallery of Portraits of American Indians and Indian Curiosities, all of which remained as an adornment.

On our second visit to the Queen, we were received in what is called the "Yellow Drawing-Room," a magnificent apartment, surpassing in splendor and gorgeousness anything of the kind I had ever seen. It is on the north side of the gallery, and is entered from that apartment. It was hung with drapery of rich yellow satin damask, the couches, sofas and chairs being covered with the same material. The vases, urns, and orna-

² George Catlin (1796-1872), the American artist and traveller. His series of more than five hundred life-portraits of Indians is now in the National Museum at Washington, D. C. [Ed.]

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ments were all of modern patterns, and the most exquisite workmanship. The room was panelled in gold, and the heavy cornices beautifully carved and gilt. The tables, pianos, etc., were mounted with gold, inlaid with pearl of various hues, and of the most elegant designs.

We were ushered into this gorgeous drawing-room before the Queen and royal circle had left the dining-room, and, as they approached, the General bowed respectfully, and remarked to Her Majesty "that he had seen her before," adding, "I think this is a prettier room than the picture gallery; that chandelier is very fine." The Queen smilingly took him by the hand, and said she hoped he was very well.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied, "I am first-rate."

"General," continued the Queen, "this is the Prince of Wales."

"How are you, Prince?" said the General, shaking him by the hand; and then standing beside the Prince, he remarked, "The Prince is taller than I am, but I feel as big as anybody" — upon which he strutted up and down the room as proud as a peacock, amid shouts of laughter from all present.

The Queen then introduced the Princess Royal, and the General immediately led her to his elegant little sofa, which we took with us, and with much politeness sat himself down beside her. Then, rising from his seat, he went through his various performances, and the Queen handed him an elegant and costly souvenir, which had been expressly made for him by her order — for which he told her, "he was very much obliged, and would keep it as long as he lived." The Queen of the Belgians (daughter of Louis Philippe) was present on this occasion. She asked the General where he was going when he left London.

"To Paris," he replied.

"Whom do you expect to see there?" she continued.

Of course all expected he would answer, "The King of the French," but the little fellow replied:

"I shall see Monsieur Guillaudeu in Paris."

CROWDED LEVEES

The two Queens looked inquiringly to me, and when I informed them that M. Guillaudeu was my French naturalist, who had preceded me to Paris, they laughed most heartily.

On our third visit to Buckingham Palace, Leopold, King of the Belgians, was also present. He was highly pleased, and asked a multitude of questions. Queen Victoria desired the General to sing a song, and asked him what song he preferred to sing.

"Yankee Doodle," was the prompt reply.

This answer was as unexpected to me as it was to the royal party. When the merriment it occasioned somewhat subsided, the Queen good-humoredly remarked, "That is a very pretty song, General. Sing it, if you please." The General complied, and soon afterwards we retired. I ought to add, that after each of our three visits to Buckingham Palace, a very handsome present was sent to me, of course by the Queen's command. This, however, was the smallest part of the advantage derived from these interviews, as will be at once apparent to all who consider the force of Court example in England.

The British public were now fairly excited. Not to have seen General Tom Thumb was decidedly unfashionable, and from March 20th until July 20th, the levees of the little General at Egyptian Hall were continually crowded, the receipts averaging during the whole period about five hundred dollars per day, and sometimes going considerably beyond that sum. At the fashionable hour, between fifty and sixty carriages of the nobility have been counted at one time standing in front of our exhibition rooms in Piccadilly.

Portraits of the little General were published in all the pictorial papers of the time. Polkas and quadrilles were named after him, and songs were sung in his praise. He was an almost constant theme for the London "Punch," which served up the General and myself so daintily that it no doubt added vastly to our receipts.

Besides his three public performances per day, the little General attended from three to four private parties per week, for

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which we were paid eight to ten guineas each. Frequently we would visit two parties in the same evening, and the demand in that line was much greater than the supply. The Queen Dowager Adelaide³ requested the General's attendance at Marlborough House one afternoon. He went in his court dress, consisting of a richly embroidered brown silk-velvet coat and short breeches, white satin vest with fancy-colored embroidery, white silk stockings and pumps, wig, bag-wig, cocked hat, and a dress sword.

"Why, General," said the Queen Dowager, "I think you look very smart to-day."

"I guess I do," said the General complacently.

A large party of the nobility were present. The old Duke of Cambridge offered the little General a pinch of snuff, which he declined. The General sang his songs, performed his dances, and cracked his jokes, to the great amusement and delight of the distinguished circle of visitors.

"Dear little General," said the kind-hearted Queen, taking him upon her lap, "I see you have got [*sic* — Ed.] no watch. Will you permit me to present you with a watch and chain?"

"I would like them very much," replied the General, his eyes glistening with joy as he spoke.

"I will have them made expressly for you," responded the Queen Dowager; and at the same moment she called a friend and desired him to see that the proper order was executed. A few weeks thereafter we were called again to Marlborough House. A number of the children of the nobility were present, as well as some of their parents. After passing a few compliments with the General, Queen Adelaide presented him with a beautiful little gold watch, placing the chain around his neck with her own hands. The little fellow was delighted, and scarcely knew how sufficiently to express his thanks. The good Queen gave him some excellent advice in regard to his morals, which he strictly promised to obey.

After giving his performances, we withdrew from the royal

³ Widow of William IV. [Ed.]

THE GENERAL'S REPLY

presence, and the elegant little watch presented by the hands of Her Majesty the Queen Dowager was not only duly heralded, but was also placed upon a pedestal in the hall of exhibition, together with the presents from Queen Victoria, and covered with a glass vase. These presents, to which were soon added an elegant gold snuff-box mounted with turquoise, presented by his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, and many other costly gifts of the nobility and gentry, added greatly to the attractions of the exhibition. The Duke of Wellington called frequently to see the little General at his public levees. The first time he called, the General was personating Napoleon Bonaparte, marching up and down the platform, and apparently taking snuff in deep meditation. He was dressed in the well-known uniform of the Emperor. I introduced him to the "Iron Duke," who inquired the subject of his meditations. "I was thinking of the loss of the battle of Waterloo," was the little General's immediate reply. This display of wit was chronicled throughout the country, and was of itself worth thousands of pounds to the exhibition.

While we were in London the Emperor Nicholas, of Russia, visited Queen Victoria, and I saw him on several public occasions. I was present at the grand review of troops in Windsor Park in honor of and before the Emperor of Russia and the King of Saxony.

General Tom Thumb had visited the King of Saxony and also Ibrahim Pacha who was then in London. At the different parties we attended, we met, in the course of the season, nearly all of the nobility. I do not believe that a single nobleman in England failed to see General Tom Thumb at his own house, at the house of a friend, or at the public levees at Egyptian Hall. The General was a decided pet with some of the first personages in the land, among whom may be mentioned Sir Robert and Lady Peel, the Duke and Duchess of Buckingham, Duke of Bedford, Duke of Devonshire, Count d'Orsay, Lady Blessington, Daniel O'Connell, Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence, Lord Chesterfield, Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Bates, of the firm of Baring Brothers & Co., and many other persons of distinction.

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We had the free entrée to all the theatres, public gardens, and places of entertainment, and frequently met the principal artists, editors, poets, and authors of the country. Albert Smith was a particular friend of mine. He wrote a play for the General entitled "Hop-o'-my-Thumb," which was presented with great success at the Lyceum Theatre, London, and in several of the provincial theatres.⁴ Our visit in London and tour through the provinces were enormously successful, and after a brilliant season in Great Britian I made preparations to take the General to Paris.

⁴ See pp. 291-298; 450-454. [Ed.]

CHAPTER XII

IN FRANCE

Going Over to Arrange Preliminaries—Previous Visit to Paris—Robert Houdin—Wonderful Mechanical Toys—The Automaton Letter-Writer—Dion Boucicault—Tax on Natural Curiosities—How I Compromised—The General and Party in Paris—First Visit to King Louis Philippe—A Splendid Present—Diplomacy—I Ask a Favor and Get It—Longchamps—The General's Equipage—The Finest Advertisement Ever Known—All Paris in a Furor—Opening of the Levees—"Tom Pouce" Everywhere—The General as an Actor—"Petit Poucet"—Second and Third Visits at the Tuileries—Invitation to St. Cloud—The General Personating Napoleon Bonaparte—St. Denis—The Invalides—Regnier—Anecdote of Franklin—Leaving Paris—Tour through France—Departure for Brussels.

BEFORE taking the little General and party to Paris, I went over alone to arrange the preliminaries for our campaign in that city. Paris was not altogether a strange place to me. Months before, when I had successfully established my exhibition in London, I ran over to Paris to see what I could pick up in the way of curiosities for my Museum in New York, for during my whole sojourn abroad, and amid all the excitements of my new career, I never forgot the interests of my many and generous patrons at home. The occasion which first called me to France was the "quinquennial exposition" in Paris. At that time, there was an assemblage, every five years, of inventors and manufacturers who exhibited specimens of their skill, especially in articles of curious and ingenious mechanism, and I went from London mainly to attend this exposition.

There I met and became well acquainted with Robert Houdin, the celebrated conjurer.¹ He was a watch-maker by trade,

¹ As a matter of fact, Houdin (1805-1871) has commonly been regarded as the founder of modern conjuring. He opened a "Temple of Magic" at Paris in 1845. Barnum was evidently present (see below) at some of Houdin's "soirées fantastiques." [Ed.]

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but very soon displayed a wonderful ability and ingenuity, which he devoted with so much assiduity to the construction of a complicated machine that he lost all mental power for a considerable period. When he recovered, he employed himself with great success in the manufacture of mechanical toys and automata which attracted much attention, and afterwards he visited Great Britain and other countries, giving a series of juggling exhibitions which were famous throughout Europe.

At this quinquennial exposition which I attended, he received a gold medal for his automata, and the best figure which he had on exhibition I purchased at a good round price. It was an automaton writer and artist, a most ingenious little figure, which sat at a table, and readily answered with the pencil certain questions. For instance: if asked for an emblem of fidelity, the figure instantly drew a correct picture of a handsome dog; the emblem of love was shown in an exquisite drawing of a little Cupid; the automaton would also answer many questions in writing. I carried this curious figure to London and exhibited it for some time in the Royal Adelaide Gallery, and then sent it across the Atlantic to the American Museum.

During my very brief visit to Paris, Houdin was giving evening performances in the Palais Royal, in legerdemain, and I was frequently present by invitation. Houdin also took pains to introduce me to other inventors of moving figures, which I purchased freely and made a prominent feature in my Museum attractions. I managed, too, during my short stay, to see something of the surface of the finest city in the world.

And now, going to Paris the second time, I was very fortunate in making the acquaintance of Mr. Dion Boucicault,² who was then temporarily sojourning in that city, and who at once kindly volunteered to advise and assist me in regard to

² The actor and playwright—a favorite in Irish parts, and the author or adapter of numerous pieces, including several comedies of Irish life and the version of “Rip Van Winkle” used by Joseph Jefferson, who considerably modified it. [Ed.]

GETTING A LICENSE

numerous matters of importance relating to the approaching visit of the General. He spent a day with me in search for suitable accommodations for my company, and by giving me the benefit of his experience, he saved me much trouble and expense. I have never forgotten the courtesy extended to me by this gentleman.

I stopped at the Hotel Bedford, and securing an interpreter, began to make my arrangements. The first difficulty in the way was the government tax for exhibiting natural curiosities, which was no less than one-fourth of the gross receipts, while theatres paid only eleven per cent. This tax was appropriated to the benefit of the city hospitals. Now, I knew from my experience in London that my receipts would be so large as to make twenty-five per cent. of them a far more serious tax than I thought I ought to pay to the French government, even for the benefit of the admirable hospitals of Paris. Accordingly, I went to the license bureau and had an interview with the chief. I told him I was anxious to bring a "dwarf" to Paris, but that the percentage to be paid for a license was so large as to deter me from bringing him; but letting the usual rule go, what should I give him in advance for a two months' license?

"My dear sir," he answered, "you had better not come at all; these things never draw, and you will do nothing, or so little that the percentage need not trouble you."

I expressed my willingness to try the experiment and offered one thousand francs in advance for a license. The chief would not consent and I then offered two thousand francs. This opened his eyes to a chance for a speculation and he jumped at my offer; he would do it on his own account, he said, and pay the amount of one-quarter of my receipts to the hospitals; he was perfectly safe in making such a contract, he thought, for he had 15,000 francs in bank.

But I declined to arrange this with him individually, so he called his associates together and presented the matter in such a way that the board took my offer on behalf of the government. I paid down the 2,000 francs and received a good, strong

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contract and license. The chief was quite elated and handed me the license with the remark:

"Now we have made an agreement, and if you do not exhibit, or if your dwarf dies during the two months, you shall not get back your money."

"All right," thought I; "if you are satisfied, I am sure I have every reason to be so." I then hired at a large rent, the Salle Musard, Rue Vivienne, in a central and fashionable quarter close by the boulevards, and engaged an interpreter, ticket-seller, and a small but excellent orchestra. In fact, I made the most complete arrangements, even to starting the preliminary paragraphs in the Paris papers; and after calling on the Honorable William Rufus King, the United States Minister at the Court of France³ — who assured me that after my success in London there would be no difficulty whatever in my presentation to King Louis Philippe and family — I returned to England.

I went back to Paris with General Tom Thumb and party some time before I intended to begin my exhibitions, and on the very day after my arrival I received a special command to appear at the Tuileries on the following Sunday evening. It will be remembered that Louis Philippe's daughter, the wife of King Leopold, of Belgium, had seen the General at Buckingham Palace — a fact that had been duly chronicled in the French as well as English papers, and I have no doubt that she had privately expressed her gratification at seeing him. With this advantage, and with the prestige of our receptions by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, we went to the Tuileries with full confidence that our visit and reception would be entirely satisfactory.

At the appointed hour the General and I, arrayed in the conventional court costume, were ushered into a grand saloon of the palace where we were introduced to the King, the Queen, Princess Adelaide, the Duchess d'Orléans and her son the Count de Paris, Prince de Joinville, Duke and Duchess de Ne-

³ King was minister to France in 1844-1846. [Ed.]

A PRIVILEGE ASKED

mours, the Duchess d'Aumale, and a dozen or more distinguished persons, among whom was the editor of the official "Journal des Débats." The court circle entered into conversation with us without restraint, and were greatly delighted with the little General. King Louis Philippe was minute in his inquiries about my country and talked freely about his experiences when he wandered as an exile in America. He playfully alluded to the time when he earned his living as a tutor, and said he had roughed it generally and had even slept in Indian wigwams. General Tom Thumb then went through with his various performances to the manifest pleasure of all who were present, and at the close the King presented to him a large emerald brooch set with diamonds. The General expressed his gratitude, and the King, turning to me, said: "You may put it on the General, if you please"; which I did, to the evident gratification of the King as well as the General.

King Louis Philippe was so condescending and courteous that I felt quite at home in the royal presence, and ventured upon a bit of diplomacy. The Longchamps celebration was coming — a day once devoted to religious ceremony, but now conspicuous for the display of court and fashionable equipages in the Champs Elysées and the Bois de Boulogne, and as the King was familiarly conversing with me, I ventured to say that I had hurried over to Paris to take part in the Longchamps display and I asked him if the General's carriage could not be permitted to appear in the avenue reserved for the court and the diplomatic corps, representing that the General's small but elegant establishment, with its ponies and little coachman and footman, would be in danger of damage in the general throng unless the special privilege I asked was accorded.⁴

⁴ Wood's "Giants and Dwarfs" (1868) describes the General's "dress chariot," the work of a London carriage-builder. The body, eleven inches in width and twenty in height, was painted "an intense blue, picked out with white"; the wheels were blue and red. Blazoned on the door-panels were the General's "arms" (in whose design we surely detect a familiar touch): "Britannia and the Goddess of Liberty, supported by the British lion and American eagle; the crest being the rising sun and the British and American flags; and the motto, 'Go ahead!'" The

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The king smilingly turned to one of the officers of his household and after conversing with him for a few moments he said to me :

"Call on the Prefect of Police to-morrow afternoon and you will find a permit ready for you."

Our visit occupied two hours, and when we went away the General was loaded with fine presents. The next morning all the newspapers noticed the visit, and the "*Journal des Débats*" gave a minute account of the interview and of the General's performances, taking occasion to say, in speaking of the character parts, that "there was one costume which the General wisely kept at the bottom of his box." That costume, however, — the uniform of Bonaparte — was once exhibited, by particular request, as will be seen anon.

Longchamps day arrived, and among the many splendid equipages on the grand avenue, none attracted more attention than the superb little carriage with four ponies and liveried and powdered coachman and footman, belonging to the General, and conspicuous in the line of carriages containing the Ambassadors to the Court of France. Thousands upon thousands rent the air with cheers for "*Général Tom Pouce*." There never was such an advertisement; the journals next day made elaborate notices of the "turnout," and thereafter whenever the General's carriage appeared on the boulevards, as it did daily, the people flocked to the doors of the cafés and shops to see it pass.

Thus, before I opened the exhibition all Paris knew that General Tom Thumb was in the city. The French are exceedingly impressible; and what in London is only excitement, in Paris becomes furor. Under this pressure, with the prestige of my first visit to the Tuileries and the numberless paragraphs in the papers, I opened my doors to an eager throng. The élite of the city came to the exhibition; the first day's receipts were

coachman and footman were lads in cocked hats, wigs, red breeches, and sky-blue coats garnished with silver lace. Shetland ponies drew this "small but elegant" turnout. [Ed.]

TOM POUCE

5,500 francs, which would have been doubled if I could have made room for more patrons. There were afternoon and evening performances and from that day secured seats at an extra price were engaged in advance for the entire two months. The season was more than a success, it was a triumph.

It seemed, too, as if the whole city was advertising me. The papers were profuse in their praises of the General and his performances. "Figaro," the "Punch" of Paris, gave a picture of an immense mastiff running away with the General's carriage and horses in his mouth. Statuettes of "Tom Pouce" appeared in all the windows, in plaster, Parian,⁵ sugar, and chocolate; songs were written about him and his lithograph was seen everywhere. A fine café on one of the boulevards took the name of "Tom Pouce" and displayed over the door a life-size statue of the General. In Paris, as in London, several eminent painters expressed their desire to paint his portrait, but the General's engagements were so pressing that he found little time to sit to artists. All the leading actors and actresses came to the General's levees and petted him and made him many presents. Meanwhile, the daily receipts continued to swell, and I was compelled to take a cab to carry my bag of silver home at night.

The official, who had compromised with me for a two months' license at 2,000 francs, was amazed as well as annoyed at the success of my "dwarf." He came, or sent a man, to the levees to take account of the receipts and every additional thousand francs gave him an additional twinge. He seriously appealed to me to give him more money, but when I reminded him of the excellent bargain he supposed he was making, especially when he added the conditional clause that I should forfeit the 2,000 francs if I did not exhibit or if the General died, he smiled faintly and said something about a "Yankee trick." I asked him if he would renew our agreement

⁵ A kind of porcelain clay, so called from its resemblance to Parian marble. It was used, unglazed, for the making of statuettes and various ornamental (?) objects. [Ed.]

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for two months more on the same terms; and he shrugged his shoulders and said:

"No, Monsieur Barnum; you will pay me twenty-five per cent. of your receipts when the two months of our contract expires."

But I did not; for I appealed to the authorities, claiming that I should pay only the ordinary theatrical tax, since the General's exhibition consisted chiefly of character imitations in various costumes, and he was more attractive as an actor than as a natural curiosity. My view of the case was decided to be correct, and thereafter, in Paris and throughout France, with few exceptions, I paid only the eleven per cent. theatrical tax.

Indeed, in Paris, the General made a great hit as an actor and was elected a member of the French Dramatic Society. Besides holding his levees, he appeared every night at the Vaudeville Theatre in a French play, entitled "*Petit Poucet*,"⁶ written expressly for him, and he afterwards repeated the part with great success in other cities. The demands upon our time were incessant. We were invited everywhere to dinners and entertainments, and as many of these were understood to be private performances of the General, we were most liberally remunerated therefor. M. Galignani⁷ invited us to a *soirée* and introduced us to some of the most prominent personages, including artists, actors, and editors, in Paris. The General was frequently engaged at a large price to show himself for a quarter of an hour at some fancy or charitable fair, and much money was made in this way. On Sundays, he was employed at one or another of the great gardens in the out-

⁶ "*Le petit Poucet*" ("*Little Thumb*") was the hero of one of the nursery-tales in the famous collection of Charles Perrault. He was Anglicized as "*Hop-o'-my-Thumb*." Strictly speaking, he should be kept quite distinct from Tom Thumb, a dwarf of English legend, taken over from the folk-lore of northern Europe. In his French play, by MM. Clairville and Dumanoir, the General, who had a decided comic gift, was drawn in a wooden shoe, served in a pie, and involved in various other adventures. [Ed.]

⁷ One of the Galignani brothers, John Anthony and William, publishers, who issued "*Galignani's Messenger*" (a newspaper printed in English) and many reprints of English books. [Ed.]

AT ST. CLOUD

skirts, and thus was seen by thousands of working people who could not attend his levees. All classes became acquainted with "Tom Pouce."

We were commanded to appear twice more at the Tuileries, and we were also invited to the palace on the King's birthday to witness the display of fireworks in honor of the anniversary. Our fourth and last visit to the royal family was by special invitation at St. Cloud. On each occasion we met nearly the same persons, but the visit to St. Cloud was by far the most interesting of our interviews. On this one occasion, and by the special request of the King, the General personated Napoleon Bonaparte in full costume. Louis Philippe had heard of the General in this character, and particularly desired to see him; but the affair was quite "on the sly," and no mention was made of it in the papers, particularly in the "*Journal des Débats*," which thought, no doubt, that costume was still "at the bottom of the General's box." We remained an hour, and at parting, each of the royal company gave the General a splendid present, almost smothered him with kisses, wished him a safe journey through France, and a long and happy life. After bidding them adieu, we retired to another portion of the palace to make a change of the General's costume, and to partake of some refreshments which were prepared for us. Half an hour afterwards, as we were about leaving the palace, we went through a hall leading to the front door, and in doing so passed the sitting-room in which the royal family were spending the evening. The door was open, and some of them happening to espy the General, called out for him to come in and shake hands with them once more. We entered the apartment, and there found the ladies sitting around a square table, each provided with two candles, and every one of them, including the Queen, was engaged in working at embroidery, while a young lady was reading aloud for their edification. I am sorry to say, I believe this is a sight seldom seen in families of the aristocracy on either side of the water. At the church fairs in Paris, I had frequently seen pieces of embroidery for sale, which were

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labelled as having been presented and worked by the Duchess d'Orléans, Princess Adelaide, Duchess de Nemours, and other titled ladies.

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Every one who has been in the wine district knows that the wine is trodden from the grapes by the bare feet of the peasants, and while I was there, desiring a new experience, I myself trod out a half barrel or so with my own naked feet, dancing vigorously the while to the sound of a fiddle.

In spite of the extraordinary attention and unbounded petting the little General received at the hands of all classes, he was in no sense a "spoiled child," but retained throughout that natural simplicity of character and demeanor which added so much to the charm of his exhibitions. He was literally the pet of Paris, and after a protracted and most profitable season we started on a tour through France. The little General's small Shetland ponies and miniature carriage would be sure to arouse the enthusiasm of the "Provincials," so I determined to take them along with us. We went first to Rouen, and from thence to Toulon, visiting all the intermediate towns, including Orléans, Nantes, Brest, Bordeaux — where I witnessed a review by the Dukes de Nemours and d'Aumale, of 20,000 soldiers who were encamped near the city. From Bordeaux we went to Toulouse, Montpellier, Nismes, Marseilles, and many other less important places, holding levees for a longer or shorter time. While at Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseilles the General also appeared in the theatres in his French part of "Petit Poucet."

Very soon after leaving Paris for our tour through France, I found that there were many places where it would be impossible to proceed otherwise than by post. General Tom Thumb's party numbered twelve persons, and these, with all their luggage, four little ponies, and a small carriage, must be transported in posting vehicles of some description. I therefore

EAGER INQUIRIES

resolved that as posting in France was as cheap, and more independent than any other method of travel, a purchase of posting vehicles should be made for the sole use of the renowned General Tom Thumb and suite. One vehicle, however large, would have been insufficient for the whole company and "effects," and, moreover, would have been against the regulations. These regulations required that each person should pay for the use of one horse, whether using it or not, and I therefore made the following arrangements: I purchased a post-chaise to carry six persons, to be drawn by six horses; a vehicle on springs, with seats for four persons, and room for the General's four ponies and carriage, to be drawn by four horses; and lastly, a third vehicle for conveying the baggage of the company, including the elegant little house and furniture set on the stage in the General's performances of "Petit Poucet" at the theatres, the whole drawn by two horses.

With such a retinue the General "cut quite a swell" in journeying through the country, travelling, indeed, in grander style than a field-marshal would have thought of doing in posting through France. All this folly and expense, the uninitiated would say, of employing twelve horses and twelve persons, to say nothing of the General's four ponies, in exhibiting a person weighing only fifteen pounds! But when this retinue passed along the roads, and especially when it came into a town, people naturally and eagerly inquired what great personage was on his travels, and when told that it was "the celebrated General Tom Thumb and suite," everybody desired to go and see him. It was thus the best advertising we could have had, and was really, in many places, our cheapest and in some places, our only mode of getting from point to point where our exhibitions were to be given.

During most of the tour I was a week or two ahead of the company, making arrangements for the forthcoming exhibitions, and doing my entire business without the aid of an interpreter, for I soon "picked up" French enough to get along very well indeed. I did not forget that Franklin learned to

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speaking French when he was seventy years of age, and I did not consider myself too old to learn what, indeed, I was obliged to learn in the interests of my business. As for the little General, who was accompanied by a preceptor and translator, he very soon began to give his entire speaking performances in French, and his piece "Petit Poucet" was spoken as if he were a native.

In fact, I soon became the General's *avant-courier*, though not doing the duties of an *avant-courier* to an ordinary exhibition, since these duties generally consist in largely puffing the "coming man" and expected show, thus endeavoring to create a public appetite and to excite curiosity. My duties were quite different; after engaging the largest theatre or saloon to be found in the town, I put out a simple placard, announcing that the General would appear on such a day. Thereafter, my whole energies were directed, apparently, to keeping the people quiet; I begged them not to get excited; I assured them through the public journals, that every opportunity should be afforded to permit every person to see "the distinguished little General, who had delighted the principal monarchs of Europe, and more than a million of their subjects," and that if one exhibition in the largest audience room in the town would not suffice, two or even three would be given.

This was done quietly, and yet, as an advertisement, effectively, for, strange as it may seem, people who were told to keep quiet, would get terribly excited, and when the General arrived and opened his exhibitions, excitement would be at fever heat, the levees would be thronged, and the treasury filled!

Numerous were the word-battles I had with mayors, managers of theatres, directors of hospitals, and others, relative to what I considered — justly, I think — the outrageous imposition which the laws permitted in the way of taxes upon "exhibitions." Thus the laws required, for the sake of charity, twenty-five per cent. of my gross receipts for the hospitals; while to encourage a local theatre, or theatres, which might

A DILEMMA

suffer from an outside show, twenty per cent. more must be given to the local managers.

Of course this law was nearly a dead letter; for, to have taken forty-five per cent. of my gross receipts at every exhibition would soon have driven me from the provinces, so the hospitals were generally content with ten per cent. and five or ten francs a day satisfied the manager of a provincial theatre. But at Bordeaux the manager of the theatre wished to engage the General to appear in his establishment, and as I declined his offer, he threatened to debar me from exhibiting anywhere in town, by demanding for himself the full twenty per cent. the law allowed, besides inducing the directors of the hospitals to compel me to pay them twenty-five per cent. more.

Here was a dilemma! I must yield and take half I thought myself entitled to and permit the General to play for the manager, or submit to legal extortion, or forego my exhibitions. I offered the manager six per cent. of my receipts and he laughed at me. I talked with the hospital directors and they told me that as the manager favored them, they felt bound to stand by him. I announced in the public journals that the General could not appear in Bordeaux on account of the cupidity and extortionate demands of the theatre manager and the hospital directors. The people talked and the papers denounced; but manager and directors remained as firm as rocks in their positions. Tom Thumb was to arrive in two days and I was in a decided scrape. The mayor interceded for me, but to no avail; the manager had determined to enforce an almost obsolete law unless I would permit the General to play in his theatre every night. My Yankee "dander" was up and I declared that I would exhibit the General gratis rather than submit to the demand. Whereupon, the manager only laughed at me the more to think how snugly he had got me.

Now it happened that, once upon a time, Bordeaux, like most cities, was a little village, and the little village of Vincennes lay one mile east of it. Bordeaux had grown and stretched itself and thickly settled far beyond Vincennes, bring-

A LESSON

ing the latter nearly in the center of Bordeaux; yet, strange to say, Vincennes maintained its own identity, and had its own Mayor and municipal rights quite independent of Bordeaux. I could scarcely believe my informant who told me this, but I speedily sought out the Mayor of Vincennes, found such a personage, and cautiously inquired if there was a theatre or a hospital within his limits? He assured me there was not. I told him my story, and asked:

“If I open an exhibition within your limits will there be any percentages to pay from my receipts?”

“Not a sou,” replied the Mayor.

“Will you give me a writing to that effect?”

“With the greatest pleasure,” replied the Mayor, and he did so at once.

I put this precious paper in my pocket, and in a few moments I hired the largest dancing saloon in the place, a room capable of holding over 2,000 people. I then announced, especially to the delighted citizens of Bordeaux, that the General would open his exhibitions in Vincennes, which he soon did to an overflowing house. For thirteen days we exhibited to houses averaging more than 3,000 francs per day, and for ten days more at largely increased receipts, not one sou of which went for taxes or percentages. The manager and directors, theatre and hospital, got nothing, instead of the fair allowance I would willingly have given them. Oh, yes! they got something, — that is, a lesson, — not to attempt to offset French Shylockism against Yankee shrewdness.

We were in the South of France in the vintage season. Nothing can surpass the richness of the country at that time of the year. We travelled for many miles where the eye could see nothing but vineyards loaded with luscious grapes and groves of olive trees in full bearing. It is literally a country of wine and oil. Our remunerative and gratifying round of mingled pleasure and profit brought us at last to Lille, capital of the department of Nord, and fifteen miles from the Belgian frontier, and from thence we proceeded to Brussels.

CHAPTER XIII

IN BELGIUM

Crossing the Frontier—Professor Pinte—Qualification of a Good Showman—"Soft Sup"—Generous Distribution of Medals—Prince Charles Stratton—At Brussels—Presentation to King Leopold and His Queen—The General's Jewels Stolen—The Thief Caught—Recovery of the Property—The Field of Waterloo—Miraculously Multiplied Relics—Captain Tippiwichee of the Connecticut Fusileers—An Accident—Getting Back to Brussels in a Cart—Stratton Swindled—Losing an Exhibition—Two Hours in the Rain on the Road—The Custom of the Country—A Strict Constructionist—"Brummagem" Relics—How They Are Planted at Waterloo—From Brussels to London.

IN crossing the border from France into Belgium, Professor Pinte, our interpreter and General Tom Thumb's preceptor, discovered that he had left his passport behind him—at Lille, at Marseilles, or elsewhere in France, he could not tell where, for it was a long time since he had been called upon to present it. I was much annoyed and indignantly told him that he "would never make a good showman, because a good showman never forgot anything." I could see that my allusion to him as a "showman" was by no means pleasant, which leads me to recount the circumstances under which I was first brought in contact with the Professor.

He was really a "Professor" and teacher of English in one of the best educational establishments in Paris. Very soon after opening my exhibitions in that city, I saw the necessity of having a translator who was qualified to act as a medium between the General and the highly cultivated audiences that daily favored us at our levees. I had begun with a not over-cultivated interpreter, who, when the General personated Cupid, for instance, would cry out "Coopeed," to which some one would be sure to respond "Stoopeed," to the annoyance of myself and

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the amusement of the audience. I accordingly determined to procure the best interpreter I could find and I was directed to call upon Professor Pinte. I saw him and briefly stated what I wanted, in what capacity I proposed to employ him, and what salary I would pay him. He was highly indignant and informed me that he was "no showman," and had no desire to learn or engage in the business.

"But, my dear sir," said I, "it is not as a showman that I wish to employ your valuable services, but as a preceptor to my young and interesting ward, General Tom Thumb, whom I desire to have instructed in the French language and in other accomplishments you are so competent to impart. At the same time, I should expect that you would be willing to accompany my ward and your pupil and attend his public exhibitions for the purpose of translating, as may be necessary, to the cultivated people of your own class, who are the principal patrons of our entertainments."

This seemed to put an entirely new face upon the matter, especially as I had offered the Professor a salary five times larger, probably, than he was then receiving. So he rapidly revolved the subject in his mind and said:

"Ah! while I could not possibly accept a situation as a showman, I should be most happy to accept the terms and the position as preceptor to your ward."

He was engaged, and at once entered upon his duties, not only as preceptor to the General, but as the efficient and always excellent interpreter at our exhibitions, and wherever we needed his services on the route. As he had lost his passport, when we came to Courtrai on the Belgian frontier, I managed to procure a permit for him which enabled him to proceed with the party. This was but the beginning of difficulties, for I had all our property, including the General's ponies and equipage, to pass through the Custom-house, and among other things there was a large box of medals, with a likeness of the General on one side and of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert on the other side, which were sold in large numbers as souvenirs at our exhibi-

SOUVENIRS

tions. They were struck off at a considerable expense in England, and commanded a ready sale.

The Custom-house officers were informed, however, that these medals were mere advertising cards, as they really were, of our exhibitions, and I begged their acceptance of as many as they pleased to put in their pockets. They were beautiful medals, and a few dozen were speedily distributed among the delighted officials, who forthwith passed our show-bills, lithographs, and other property with very little trouble. They wanted, however, to charge a duty upon the General's ponies and carriage, but when I produced a document showing that the French government had admitted them duty-free, they did the same. This superb establishment led these officials to think he must be a very distinguished man, and they asked what rank he held in his own country.

"He is Prince Charles Stratton, of the Dukedom of Bridgeport, in the Kingdom of Connecticut," said Sherman.

Whereupon they all reverently raised their hats when the General entered the car. Some of the railway men who had seen the distribution of medals among the Custom-house officers came to me and begged similar "souvenirs" of their distinguished passenger, and I gave the medals very freely, till the applications became so persistent as to threaten a serious pecuniary loss. At last I handed out a final dozen in one package, and said: "There, that is the last of them; the rest are in the box, and beyond my reach."

All this while Professor Pinte was brooding over my remark to him about the loss of his passport; the word "showman" rankled, and he asked me:

"Mr. Barnum, do you consider me a showman?"

I laughingly replied, "Why, I consider you the eminent Professor Pinte, preceptor to General Tom Thumb; but, after all, we are all showmen."

Finding himself so classed with the rest of us, he ventured to inquire what were the qualifications of a good showman, to which I replied:

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"He must have a decided taste for catering for the public; prominent perceptive faculties; tact; a thorough knowledge of human nature; great suavity; and plenty of 'soft soap.'"

"Soft sup!" exclaimed the interested Professor. "What is soft sup?"

I explained, as best I could, how the literal meaning of the words had come to convey the idea of getting into the good graces of people and pleasing those with whom we are brought in contact. Pinte laughed, and as he thought of the generous medal distribution, an idea struck him:

"I think those railway officials must have very dirty hands — you are compelled to use so much soft sup."

Brussels is Paris in miniature and is one of the most charming cities I ever visited. We found elegant quarters, and the day after our arrival by command we visited King Leopold and the Queen at their palace. The King and Queen had already seen the General in London, but they wished to present him to their children and to the distinguished persons whom we found assembled. After a most agreeable hour we came away — the General, as usual, receiving many fine presents.

The following day, I opened the exhibition in a beautiful hall, which on that day and on every afternoon and evening while we remained there, was crowded by throngs of the first people in the city. On the second or third day, in the midst of the exhibition, I suddenly missed the case containing the valuable presents the General had received from kings, queens, noblemen, and gentlemen, and instantly gave the alarm; some thief had intruded for the express purpose of stealing these jewels, and, in the crowd, had been entirely successful in his object.

The police were notified, and I offered 2,000 francs reward for the recovery of the property. A day or two afterwards a man went into a jeweller's shop and offered for sale, among other things, a gold snuff-box, mounted with turquoises, and presented by the Duke of Devonshire to the General. The jeweller, seeing the General's initials on the box, sharply ques-

THE FIELD OF WATERLOO

tioned the man, who became alarmed and ran out of the shop. An alarm was raised, and the man was caught. He made a clean breast of it, and in the course of a few hours the entire property was returned, to the great delight of the General and myself. Wherever we exhibited afterwards, no matter how respectable the audience, the case of presents was always carefully watched.

While I was in Brussels I could do no less than visit the battle-field of Waterloo, and I proposed that our party should be composed of Professor Pinte, Mr. Stratton, father of General Tom Thumb, Mr. H. G. Sherman, and myself. Going sight-seeing was a new sensation to Stratton, and as it was necessary to start by four o'clock in the morning, in order to accomplish the distance (sixteen miles) and return in time for our afternoon performance, he demurred.

"I don't want to get up before daylight and go off on a journey for the sake of seeing a darned old field of wheat," said Stratton.

"Sherwood, do try to be like somebody, once in your life, and go," said his wife.

The appeal was irresistible, and he consented. We engaged a coach and horses the night previous, and started punctually at the hour appointed. We stopped at the neat little church in the village of Waterloo, for the purpose of examining the tablets erected to the memory of some of the English who fell in the contest. Thence we passed to the house in which the leg of Lord Uxbridge (Marquis of Anglesey)¹ was amputated. A neat little monument in the garden designates the spot where the shattered member had been interred. In the house is shown a part of the boot which is said to have once covered the unlucky leg. The visitor feels it but considerate to hand a franc or two to the female who exhibits this monument and limb. I did so, and Stratton, though he felt that he had not received the worth of his money, still did not like to be considered penurious, so he handed over a piece of silver coin to the attendant.

¹ Commander of the British cavalry at Waterloo. [Ed.]

I expressed a desire to have a small piece of the boot to exhibit in my Museum; the lady cut off, without hesitation, a slip three inches long by one in width. I handed her a couple more francs, and Stratton desiring, as he said, to "show a piece of the boot in old Bridgeport," received a similar slip, and paid a similar amount. I could not help thinking that if the lady was thus liberal in dispensing pieces of the "identical boot" to all visitors, this must have been about the ninety-nine thousandth boot that had been cut as the "Simon-pure" since 1815.

With the consoling reflection that the female purchased all the cast-off boots in Brussels and its vicinity, and rejoicing that somebody was making a trifle out of that accident besides the inventor of the celebrated "Anglesey leg," we passed on towards the battle-field, lying about a mile distant.

Arriving at Mont Saint-Jean,² a quarter of a mile from the ground, we were beset by some eighteen or twenty persons, who offered their services as guides, to indicate the most important localities. Each applicant professed to know the exact spot where every man had been placed who had taken part in the battle, and each, of course, claimed to have been engaged in that sanguinary contest, although it had occurred thirty years before, and some of these fellows were only, it seemed, from twenty-five to twenty-eight years of age! We accepted an old man, who at first declared that he was killed in the battle, but perceiving our looks of incredulity, consented to modify his statement so far as to assert that he was horribly wounded, and lay upon the ground three days before receiving assistance.

Once upon the ground, our guide, with much gravity, pointed out the place where the Duke of Wellington took his station during a great part of the action; the locality where the reserve of the British army was stationed; the spot where Napoleon placed his favorite guard; the little mound on which was erected a temporary observatory for his use during the battle; the portion of the field at which Blücher entered with the Prus-

² In France the name of this hamlet has frequently been given to the battle.
[Ed.]

NUMEROUS PURCHASES

sian army; the precise location of the Scotch Greys; the spot where fell Sir Alexander Gordon, Lieutenant-Colonel Canning, and many others of celebrity. I asked him if he could tell me where Captain Tippiwichee, of the Connecticut Fusileers, was killed. "Oui, monsieur," he replied, with perfect confidence, for he felt bound to know, or to pretend to know, every particular. He then proceeded to point out exactly the spot where my unfortunate Connecticut friend had breathed his last. After indicating the locations where some twenty more fictitious friends from Coney Island, New Jersey, Cape Cod, and Saratoga Springs, had given up the ghost, we handed him his commission and declined to give him further trouble. Stratton grumbled at the imposition as he handed out a couple of francs for the information received.

Upon quitting the battle-field we were accosted by a dozen persons of both sexes with baskets on their arms or bags in their hands, containing relics of the battle for sale. These consisted of a great variety of implements of war, pistols, bullets, etc., beside brass French eagles, buttons, etc. I purchased a number of them for the Museum, and Stratton was equally liberal in obtaining a supply for his friends in "Old Bridgeport." We also purchased maps of the battle-ground, pictures of the triumphal mound surmounted by the colossal Belgic Lion in bronze, etc., etc. These frequent and renewed taxations annoyed Stratton very much, and as he handed out a five-franc piece for a "complete guide-book," he remarked, that "he guessed the battle of Waterloo had cost a darned sight more since it was fought than it did before!"

But his misfortunes did not terminate here. When we had proceeded four or five miles upon our road home, crash went the carriage. We alighted, and found that the axle-tree was broken. It was now a quarter past one o'clock. The little General's exhibition was advertised to commence in Brussels at two o'clock, and could not take place without us. We were unable to walk the distance in double the time at our disposal, and as no carriage was to be got in that part of the country, I con-

cluded to take the matter easy, and forego all idea of exhibiting before evening. Stratton, however, could not bear the thought of losing the chance of taking in six or eight hundred francs, and he determined to take matters in hand, in order, if possible, to get our party into Brussels in time to save the afternoon exhibition. He hastened to a farm-house, accompanied by the interpreter, Professor Pinte; Sherman and myself leisurely bringing up the rear. Stratton asked the old farmer if he had a carriage. He had not. "Have you no vehicle?" he inquired.

"Yes, I have that vehicle," he replied, pointing to an old cart filled with manure, and standing in his barnyard.

"Thunder! Is that all the conveyance you have got?" asked Stratton. Being assured that it was, Stratton concluded that it was better to ride in a manure cart than not get to Brussels in time.

"What will you ask to drive us to Brussels in three-quarters of an hour?" demanded Stratton.

"It is impossible," replied the farmer; "I should want two hours for my horse to do it in."

"But ours is a very pressing case, and if we are not there in time we lose more than five hundred francs," said Stratton.

The old farmer pricked up his ears at this, and agreed to get us to Brussels in an hour, for eighty francs. Stratton tried to beat him down, but it was no use.

"Oh, go it, Stratton," said Sherman; "eighty francs you know is only sixteen dollars, and you will probably save a hundred by it, for I expect a full house at our afternoon exhibition to-day."

"But I have already spent about ten dollars for nonsense," said Stratton, "and we shall have to pay for the broken carriage besides."

"But what can you do better?" chimed in Professor Pinte.

"It is an outrageous extortion to charge sixteen dollars for an old horse and cart to go ten miles. Why, in old Bridgeport I could get it done for three dollars," replied Stratton, in a tone of vexation.

“ *THE OLD ROBBER* ”

“ It is the custom of the country,” said Professor Pinte, “ and we must submit to it.”

By the way, this was a favorite expression of the Professor’s. Whenever we were imposed upon, or felt that we were not used right, Pinte would always endeavor to smooth it over by informing us it was “ the custom of the country.”

“ Well, it’s a thundering mean custom, anyhow,” said Stratton, “ and I won’t stand such an imposition.”

“ But what shall we do ? ” earnestly inquired Mr. Pinte. “ It may be a high price, but it is better to pay that than to lose our afternoon performance and five or six hundred francs.”

This appeal to the pocket touched Stratton’s feelings; so submitting to the extortion, he replied to our interpreter, “ Well, tell the old robber to dump his dung-cart as soon as possible, or we shall lose half an hour in starting.”

The cart was “ dumped ” and a large, lazy-looking Flemish horse was attached to it with a rope harness. Some boards were laid across the cart for seats, the party tumbled into the rustic vehicle, a red-haired boy, son of the old farmer, mounted the horse, and Stratton gave orders to “ get along.” “ Wait a moment,” said the farmer, “ you have not paid me yet.” “ I’ll pay your boy when we get to Brussels, provided he gets there within the hour,” replied Stratton.

“ Oh, he is sure to get there in an hour,” said the farmer, “ but I can’t let him go unless you pay in advance.” The minutes were flying rapidly, the anticipated loss of the day exhibition of General Tom Thumb flitted before his eyes, and Stratton, in very desperation, thrust his hand into his pocket and drew forth sixteen five-franc pieces, which he dropped, one at a time, into the hand of the farmer, and then called out to the boy, “ There now, do try to see if you can go ahead.”

The boy did go ahead, but it was with such a snail’s pace that it would have puzzled a man of tolerable eye-sight to have determined whether the horse was moving or standing still. To make it still more interesting, it commenced raining furiously. As we had left Brussels in a coach, and the morning had prom-

ised us a pleasant day, we had omitted our umbrellas. We were soon soaked to the skin. We "grinned and bore it" awhile without grumbling. At length Stratton, who was almost too angry to speak, desired Mr. Pinte to ask the red-haired boy if he expected to walk his horse all the way to Brussels.

"Certainly," replied the boy; "he is too big and fat to do any thing but walk. We never trot him."

Stratton was terrified as he thought of the loss of the day exhibition; and he cursed the boy, the cart, the rain, the luck, and even the battle of Waterloo itself. But it was all of no use, the horse would not run, but the rain did — down our backs.

At two o'clock, the time appointed for our exhibition, we were yet some seven miles from Brussels. The horse walked slowly and philosophically through the pitiless storm, the steam majestically rising from the old manure-cart, to the no small disturbance of our unfortunate olfactories. "It will take two hours to get to Brussels at this rate," growled Stratton. "Oh, no," replied the boy, "it will only take about two hours from the time we started."

"But your father agreed to get us there in an hour," answered Stratton.

"I know it," responded the boy, "but he knew it would take more than two."

"I'll sue him for damage, by thunder," said Stratton.

"Oh, there would be no use in that," chimed in Mr. Pinte, "for you could get no satisfaction in this country."

"But I shall lose more than a hundred dollars by being two hours instead of one," said Stratton.

"They care nothing about that; all they care for is your eighty francs," remarked Pinte.

"But they have lied and swindled me," repeated Stratton.

"Oh, you must not mind that, it is the custom of the country."

Stratton gave "the country" and its "customs" another cursing.

All things will finally have an end, and our party did at length

BRUMMAGEM RELICS

actually arrive in Brussels, cart and all, in precisely two hours and a half from the time we left the farmer's house. Of course we were too late to exhibit the little General. Hundreds of visitors had gone away disappointed.

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Several months subsequent to our visit to Waterloo, I was in Birmingham, and there made the acquaintance of a firm who manufactured to order, and sent to Waterloo, barrels of "relics" every year. At Waterloo these "relics" are planted, and in due time dug up, and sold at large prices as precious remembrances of the great battle. Our Waterloo purchases looked rather cheap after this discovery.

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There were many other amusing incidents during our brief stay at Brussels, but I have no space to record them. After a very pleasant and successful week, we returned to London.

CHAPTER XIV

IN ENGLAND AGAIN

Levees in Egyptian Hall—Undiminished Success—Other Engagements—“Up in a Balloon”—Provincial Tour—Travelling by Post—Going to America—A. T. Stewart—Samuel Rogers—An Extra Train—An Astonished Railway Superintendent—Left Behind and Locked Up—Sundays in London—Business and Pleasure—Albert Smith—A Day with Him at Warwick—Stratford-on-Avon—A Poetical Barber—Warwick Castle—Old Guy’s Traps—Offer to Buy the Lot—Threat to Burst the Show—Albert Smith as a Showman—Learning the Business from Barnum—The Warwick Races—Rival Dwarfs—Manufactured Giantesses—The Happy Family—The Road from Warwick to Coventry—Peeping Tom—The Yankee Go-ahead Principle—Albert Smith’s Account of a Day with Barnum.

IN London the General again opened his levees in Egyptian Hall with undiminished success. His unbounded popularity on the Continent and his receptions by King Louis Philippe, of France, and King Leopold, of Belgium, had added greatly to his prestige and fame. Those who had seen him when he was in London months before came to see him again, and new visitors crowded by thousands to the General’s levees.

Besides giving these daily entertainments, the General appeared occasionally for an hour, during the intermissions, at some place in the suburbs; and for a long time he appeared every day at the Surrey Zoölogical Gardens, under the direction of the proprietor, my particular friend, Mr. W. Tyler. This place subsequently became celebrated for its great music hall, in which Spurgeon, the sensational preacher, first attained his notoriety. The place was always crowded, and when the General had gone through with his performances on the little stage, in order that all might see him he was put into a balloon which, secured by ropes, was then passed around the

ground just above the people’s heads. Some forty men managed the ropes and prevented the balloon from rising; but, one day, a sudden gust of wind took the balloon fairly out of the hands of half the men who had hold of the ropes, while others were lifted from the ground, and had not an alarm been instantly given which called at least two hundred to the rescue the little General would have been lost.

In addition to other engagements, the General frequently performed in Douglass’ Standard Theatre, in the city, in the play “Hop-o’-my-Thumb,” which was written for him by my friend, Albert Smith,¹ whom I met soon after my first arrival in London and with whom I became very intimate. After my arrival in Paris, seeing the decided success of “Petit Poucet,” it occurred to me that I should want such a play when I returned to England and the United States. So I wrote to Mr. Albert Smith, inviting him to make me a visit in Paris, intending to have him see this play and either translate or adapt it, or write a new one in English. He came and stayed with me a week, visiting the Vaudeville Theatre to see “Petit Poucet” nearly every night, and we compared notes and settled upon a plan for “Hop-o’-my-Thumb.” He went back to London and wrote the play and it was very popular indeed.²

During our stay of three months, at this time, in Egyptian Hall, we made occasional excursions and gave exhibitions at Brighton, Bath, Cheltenham, Leamington and other watering places and fashionable resorts. It was at the height of the season in these places, and our houses were very large and our profits in proportion.

¹ Albert Smith (1816-1860) was a writer of extravaganzas, a contributor to “Punch,” and the author of several novels. His ascent of Mont Blanc, referred to further along in this chapter, was made in 1851. See also pp. 450-454. [Ed.]

² The full title was: “Hop-o’-my-Thumb; or the Seven-League Boots: a Romance of Nursery History in Two Acts.” A cast of adult players supported the General, who sang various songs; did a “Nigger dance” and a sailor’s horn-pipe; and at the close of the second act, having spoken a tag to the audience, was driven away in his miniature carriage. [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

In October, 1844, I made my first return visit to the United States, leaving General Tom Thumb in England, in the hands of an accomplished and faithful agent, who continued the exhibitions during my absence.³ One of the principal reasons for my return at this time, was my anxiety to renew the Museum building lease, although my first lease of five years had still three years longer to run. I told Mr. Olmsted that if he would not renew my lease on the same terms, for at least five years more, I would immediately put up a new building, remove my Museum, close his building during the last year of my lease, and

³ While abroad in 1844-1847, Barnum acted as a foreign correspondent of the New York "Atlas," for which he wrote a hundred letters. In one of these, written after his first "return visit," he paid his respects to certain Americans in the following style:

"A source of great amusement to me on my return to New York, was the discovery of many *new* friends. I could hardly credit my senses, when I discovered so many wealthy men extending their hands to me and expressing their delight at seeing me again, who before I left New York would have looked down on me with disdain had I presumed to speak to them. I really forgot, until they forced the truth upon my mind, that since I left them I had accumulated a few more dirty dollars, and that now therefore we stood on equal ground! On the other hand, I met some honest friends in humble circumstances, who approached me with diffidence never before exhibited — and then again I felt ashamed of human nature. What a pitiful state of society it is, which elevates a booby or a tyrant to its summit, provided he has more gold than others — while a good heart or a wise head is contemptuously disregarded if their owner happens to be poor!

"No man can be truly happy who, because he chances to be rich, mounts upon stilts, and attempts to stride over his fellow-beings. For my own part, the only special benefit which, as I conceive, wealth can confer upon an individual is, that while it enables him to secure the comforts and conveniences of life, it affords him an opportunity to contribute to the wants of his fellow-beings. My sincere prayer is, that I may be reduced to beggary, rather than become a pampered, purse-proud aristocrat.

"This coat, I am sorry to say, will fit many of my acquaintances in New York. I beg them, for their own sakes and for mine to wear it. I wish *them*, and all the world, to know that my father was *a tailor*, and that I am '*a showman*' by profession, and all the *gilding* shall make nothing else of me. When a man is ashamed of his origin, or gets above his business, he is a poor devil, who merits the detestation of all who know him. The idea that a shoemaker or a tinker cannot be a gentleman, is simply ridiculous; but it is not as much so as that which assumes every man necessarily to be a gentleman if he happens to be wealthy. Money should in no sense be made the standard of respectability or honor. We should never worship 'golden calves.'" [Ed.]

LONDON FRIENDS

cover it from top to bottom with placards, stating where my new Museum was to be found. Pending an arrangement, I went to Mr. A. T. Stewart, who had just purchased the Washington Hall property, at the corner of Broadway and Chambers street, intending to erect a store on the site, and proposed to join him in building, he to take the lower floor of the new store for his business, and I to own and occupy the upper stories for my Museum. He said he would give me an answer in the course of a week. Meanwhile, Mr. Olmsted gave me the additional five years' lease I asked, and I so notified Mr. Stewart. Seeing the kind of building that Mr. Stewart erected on his lots, I do not know if he seriously entertained my proposition to join him in the enterprise; but he was by no means the great merchant then he afterwards became, and neither of us then thought, probably, of the gigantic enterprises we were subsequently to undertake, and the great things we were to accomplish. Having completed my business arrangements in New York, I returned to England with my wife and daughters, and hired a house in London. My house was the scene of constant hospitality which I extended to my numerous friends in return for the many attentions shown to me. It seemed then as if I had more and stronger friends in London than in New York. I had met and had been introduced to "almost everybody who was anybody," and among them all, some of the best soon became to me much more than mere acquaintances.

Among the distinguished people whom I met, I was introduced to the poet-banker, Samuel Rogers. I saw him at a dinner party at the residence of the American Minister, the Honorable Edward Everett. The old banker was very feeble, but careful nursing and all the appliances that unbounded wealth could bring still kept the life in him and he managed, not only to continue to give his own celebrated breakfasts, but to go out frequently to enjoy the hospitality of others.⁴ As we were going in to dinner, I stepped aside, so that Mr. Rogers, who was

⁴ Rogers, whose London house was so long a meeting-place of writing folk, lived to be over ninety-two (d. 1855). [Ed.]

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tottering along, leaning on the arm of a friend, could go in before me, when Mr. Rogers said :

“ Pass in, Mr. Barnum, pass in ; I always consider it an honor to follow an American.”

When our three months' engagement at Egyptian Hall had expired, I arranged for a protracted provincial tour through Great Britain. I had made a flying visit to Scotland before we went to Paris — mainly to procure the beautiful Scotch costumes, daggers, etc., which were carefully made for the General at Edinburgh, and to teach the General the Scotch dances, with a bit of the Scotch dialect, which added so much to the interest of his exhibitions in Paris and elsewhere. My second visit to Scotland, for the purpose of giving exhibitions, extended as far as Aberdeen.

In England we went to Manchester, Birmingham, and to almost every city, town, and even village of importance. We travelled by post much of the time — that is, I had a suitable carriage made for my party, and a van which conveyed the General's carriage, ponies, and such other “ property ” as was needed for our levees, — and we never had the slightest difficulty in finding good post horses at every station where we wanted them. This mode of travelling was not only very comfortable and independent, but it enabled us to visit many out-of-the-way places, off from the great lines of travel, and in such places we gave some of our most successful exhibitions. We also used the railway lines freely, leaving our carriages at any station, and taking them up again when we returned.

I remember once making an extraordinary effort to reach a branch-line station, where I meant to leave my teams and take the rail for Rugby. I had a time-table, and knew at what hour exactly I could hit the train ; but unfortunately the axle to my carriage broke, and as an hour was lost in repairing it, I lost exactly an hour in reaching the station. The train had long been gone, and I must be in Rugby, where we had advertised a performance. I stormed around till I found the superintendent, and told him I must instantly have an extra train to Rugby.

SIXTY POUNDS

"Extra train!" said he, with surprise and a half sneer, "extra train! Why, you can't have an extra train to Rugby for less than sixty pounds."

"Is that all?" I asked; "well, get up your train immediately and here are your sixty pounds. What in the world are sixty pounds to me, when I wish to go to Rugby, or elsewhere, in a hurry!"

The astonished superintendent took the money, bustled about, and the train was soon ready. He was greatly puzzled to know what distinguished person — he thought he must be dealing with some prince, or, at least, a duke — was willing to give so much money to save a few hours of time, and he hesitatingly asked whom he had the honor of serving.

"General Tom Thumb."

We reached Rugby in time to give our performance, as announced, and our receipts were £160, which quite covered the expense of our extra train and left a handsome margin for profit.

When we were in Oxford, a dozen or more of the students came to the conclusion that as the General was a little fellow, the admission fee to his entertainments should be paid in the smallest kind of money. They accordingly provided themselves with farthings, and as each man entered, instead of handing in a shilling for his ticket, he laid down forty-eight farthings. The counting of these small coins was a great annoyance to Mr. Stratton, the General's father, who was ticket-seller, and after counting two or three handfuls, vexed at the delay which was preventing a crowd of ladies and gentlemen from buying tickets, Mr. Stratton lost his temper and cried out:

"Blast your quarter pennies! I am not going to count them! You chaps who haven't bigger money can chuck your copper into my hat and walk in."

At Cambridge, some of the under-graduates pretended to take offence because our check-taker would not permit them to smoke in the exhibition hall, and one of them managed to involve him in a quarrel which ended with a challenge from the

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

student to the check-taker, who was sure he must fight a duel at sunrise the next morning, and as he expected to be shot, he suffered the greatest mental agony. About midnight, however, after he had been sufficiently scared, I brought him the gratifying intelligence that I had succeeded in settling the dispute. His gratitude at the relief thus afforded, knew no bounds.

Mr. Stratton was a genuine Yankee, and thoroughly conversant with the Yankee vernacular, which he used freely. In exhibiting the General, I often said to visitors, that Tom Thumb's parents and the rest of the family were persons of the ordinary size, and that the gentleman who presided in the ticket-office was the General's father. This made poor Stratton an object of no little curiosity and he was pestered with all sorts of questions; on one occasion an old dowager said to him:

"Are you really the father of General Tom Thumb?"

"Wa'al," replied Stratton, "I have to support him!"

This evasive method of answering is common enough in New England, but the literal dowager had her doubts, and promptly rejoined:

"I rather think he supports you!"

In my journeyings through England, I always tried to get back to London Saturday night, so as to pass Sunday with my family, and to meet the friends whom we invited to dine with us on the only day in the week when I could be at home. The railway facilities are so excellent in England, that, no matter how far I might be from London, I could generally reach that city by Sunday morning, and yet do a full week's work in the provinces. This, however, necessitated travel Saturday night, and while I travelled I must sleep. Sleeping cars were, and, I believe, still are unknown in that country; but I travelled so much, and was, by this time, so well known to the guards on the leading lines, that I could generally secure one of the compartments in a first-class "coach" to myself, and my method for obtaining a good night's sleep was to lay the seat-cushions on the floor of the car, thus, with my blanket to cover me, making a tolerable bed.

SIXTY MILES AWAY

On one of these Saturday night excursions, I lay down on my extemporized couch, with the expectation of arriving at London at five o'clock in the morning. When I awoke the car was standing still, and the sun was well up in the heavens. Thinking we were very much behind time, and wondering why the train did not go on, at last I got up and looked out of the window, and, to my utter amazement, I found my car locked up in a yard, surrounded by a high fence. Espying a man who seemed to have charge of the premises, I shouted to him to come and let me out of the car, which was also locked. It instantly flashed across my mind that at this station, the guard, seeing no person sitting on the seats in the car, and concluding that it was empty, had detached it from the train, and switched it off into the yard. The astonished man whom I summoned to my assistance, informed me that I was sixty miles from London, and that there would not be another train to the city till evening. It was ten o'clock, and I was to have been home at five. I raised a great row, and demanded as my right an extra train to carry me to London, to meet the friends whom it was all-important I should see that day. I had to wait, however, till evening, and I arrived home at seven or eight o'clock, long after my friends had gone, though to the great gratification of my family, who thought some serious accident must have happened to me.

It must not be supposed that during my protracted stay abroad I confined myself wholly to business or limited my circle of observation with a golden rim. To be sure, I ever had "an eye to business," but I had also two eyes for observation and these were busily employed in leisure hours. I made the most of my opportunities and saw, hurriedly, it is true, nearly everything worth seeing in the various places which I visited. All Europe was a great curiosity shop to me and I willingly paid my money for the show.

While in London, my friend Albert Smith, a jolly companion, as well as a witty and sensible author, promised that when I reached Birmingham he would come and spend a day with me

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in sight-seeing, including a visit to the house in which Shakespeare was born.

Early one morning in the autumn of 1844, my friend Smith and myself took the box-seat of an English mail-coach, and were soon whirling at the rate of twelve miles an hour over the magnificent road leading from Birmingham to Stratford. The distance is thirty miles. At a little village four miles from Stratford, we found that the fame of the bard of Avon had travelled thus far, for we noticed a sign over a miserable barber's shop, "Shakespeare hair-dressing — a good shave for a penny." In twenty minutes more we were set down at the door of the Red Horse Hotel, in Stratford. The coachman and guard were each paid half a crown as their perquisites.

While breakfast was preparing, we called for a guide-book to the town, and the waiter brought in a book, saying that we should find in it the best description extant of the birth and burial-place of Shakespeare. I was not a little proud to find this volume to be no other than the "Sketch-Book" of our illustrious countryman, Washington Irving; and in glancing over his humorous description of the place, I discovered that he had stopped at the same hotel where we were then awaiting breakfast.

After examining the Shakespeare House,⁵ as well as the tomb and the church in which all that is mortal of the great poet rests, we ordered a post-chaise for Warwick Castle. While the horses were harnessing, a stage-coach stopped at the hotel, and two gentlemen alighted. One was a sedate, sensible-looking

⁵ Barnum aroused British pride by actually obtaining the refusal of the Shakespeare birthplace. Referring to the rumor once current that Barnum was going to buy the land around Niagara Falls and fence in the Falls for exhibition purposes, Benton says: "At another time a statement was made, equally emphatic, that he was to buy Shakespeare's house at Stratford-on-Avon, and bring it over to America, with a similar intent. Neither of these schemes was ever contemplated by him, as I happen to know, but he had no interest in contradicting the stories. He told me that he had too much reverence for those places to make a vulgar exhibition of them, which would be an inexcusable desecration; but he enjoyed the tumult made over the rumors, especially that in the English press." See p. 400. [Ed.]

A SHILLING'S WORTH

man; the other an addle-headed fop. The former was mild and unassuming in his manners; the latter was all talk, without sense or meaning — in fact, a regular Charles Chatterbox. He evidently had a high opinion of himself, and was determined that all within hearing should understand that he was — somebody. Presently the sedate gentleman said:

"Edward, this is Stratford. Let us go and see the house where Shakespeare was born."

"Who the devil is Shakespeare?" asked the sensible young gentleman.

Our post-chaise was at the door; we leaped into it, and were off, leaving the "nice young man" to enjoy a visit to the birth-place of an individual of whom he had never before heard. The distance to Warwick is fourteen miles. We went to the Castle, and approaching the door of the Great Hall, were informed by a well-dressed porter that the Earl of Warwick and family were absent, and that he was permitted to show the apartments to visitors. He introduced us successively into the "Red Drawing-Room," "The Cedar Drawing-Room," "The Gilt Room," "The State Bed-Room," "Lady Warwick's Boudoir," "The Compass Room," "The Chapel," and "The Great Dining-Room." As we passed out of the Castle, the polite porter touched his head (he of course had no hat on it) in a style which spoke plainer than words, "Half a crown each, if you please, gentlemen." We responded to the call, and were then placed in charge of another guide, who took us to the top of "Guy's Tower," at the bottom of which he touched his hat a shilling's worth; and placing ourselves in charge of a third conductor, an old man of seventy, we proceeded to the Greenhouse to see the Warwick Vase⁶ — each guide announcing at the end of his short tour: "Gentlemen, I go no farther," and indicating that the bill for his services was to be paid. The old gentleman mounted a rostrum at the side of the vase, and commenced a set speech, which we began to fear was interminable;

⁶ Found near the site of Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, Italy, and assigned to the fourth century B.C. [Ed.]

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so tossing him the usual fee, we left him in the middle of his oration.

Passing through the porter's lodge in our way out, under the impression that we had seen all that was interesting, the old porter informed us that the most curious things connected with the Castle were to be seen in his lodge. Feeling for our coin, we bade him produce his relics, and he showed us a lot of trumpery, which, he gravely informed us, belonged to that hero of antiquity, Guy, Earl of Warwick.⁷ Among these were his sword, shield, helmet, breast-plate, walking-staff, and tilting-pole, each of enormous size — the horse armor nearly large enough for an elephant, a large pot which would hold seventy gallons, called "Guy's Porridge-Pot," his flesh-fork, the size of a farmer's hay-fork, his lady's stirrups, the rib of a mastodon which the porter pretended belonged to the great "Dun Cow," which, according to tradition, haunted a ditch near Coventry, and after doing injury to many persons, was slain by the valiant Guy. The sword weighed nearly 200 pounds, and the armor 400 pounds.⁸

I told the old porter he was entitled to great credit for having concentrated more lies than I had ever before heard in so small a compass. He smiled, and evidently felt gratified by the compliment.

"I suppose," I continued, "that you have told these marvelous stories so often, that you believe them yourself?"

"Almost!" replied the porter, with a grin of satisfaction that showed he was "up to snuff," and had really earned two shillings.

"Come now, old fellow," said I, "what will you take for the entire lot of those traps? I want them for my Museum in America."

⁷ It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that Guy was a wholly legendary personage. [Ed.]

⁸ In the condensed popular form of "Struggles and Triumphs" (see the edition of 1889, p. 90), this was altered to read: "The sword weighed nearly 100 pounds, and the armor 200 pounds." [Ed.]

A BEVY OF SHOWMEN

"No money would buy these valuable historical mementos of a bygone age," replied the old porter with a leer.

"Never mind," I exclaimed; "I'll have them duplicated for my Museum, so that Americans can see them and avoid the necessity of coming here, and in that way I'll burst up your show."

Albert Smith laughed immoderately at the astonishment of the porter when I made this threat, and I was greatly amused, some years afterwards, when Albert Smith became a successful showman and was exhibiting his "Mont Blanc" to delighted audiences in London, to discover that he had introduced this very incident into his lecture, of course, changing the names and locality. He often confessed that he derived his very first idea of becoming a showman from my talk about the business and my doings, on this charming day when we visited Warwick.

The "Warwick races" were coming off that day, within half a mile of the village, and we therefore went down and spent an hour with the multitude. There was very little excitement regarding the races, and we concluded to take a tour through the "penny shows," the vans of which lined one side of the course for the distance of a quarter of a mile. On applying to enter one van, which had a large pictorial sign of giantesses, white negro, albino girls, learned pig, big snakes, etc., the keeper exclaimed:

"Come, Mister, you is the man what hired Randall, the giant, for 'Merika, and you shows Tom Thumb; now can you think of paying less than sixpence for going in here?"

The appeal was irresistible; so, satisfying his demands, we entered. Upon coming out, a whole bevy of showmen from the neighboring vans surrounded me, and began descanting on the merits and demerits of General Tom Thumb.

"Oh," says one, "I knows two dwarfs what is better ten times as Tom Thumb."

"Yes," says another, "there's no use talking about Tom Thumb while 'Melia Patton is above the ground."

"Now, I've seen Tom Thumb," added a third, "and he is a

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fine little squab, but the only 'vantage he's got is he can chaff so well. He chaffs like a man; but I can learn Dick Swift in two months, so that he can chaff Tom Thumb crazy."

"Never mind," added a fourth, "I've got a chap training what you none on you knows, what'll beat all the 'thumbs' on your grapplers."

"No, he can't," exclaimed a fifth, "for Tom Thumb has got the name, and you all know the name's everything. Tom Thumb couldn't never shine, even in my van, 'longside of a dozen dwarfs I knows, if this Yankee hadn't bamboozled our Queen, — God bless her — by getting him afore her half a dozen times."

"Yes, yes, — that's the ticket," exclaimed another; "our Queen patronizes everything foreign, and yet she wouldn't visit my beautiful wax-works to save the crown of Hingland."

"Your beautiful wax-works!" they all exclaimed, with a hearty laugh.

"Yes, and who says they hain't beautiful?" retorted the other. "They was made by the best Hitalian hartist in this country."

"They was made by Jim Caul, and showed all over the country twenty years ago," rejoined another; "and arter that they laid five years in pawn in old Moll Wiggin's cellar, covered with mould and dust."

"Well, that's a good 'un, that is!" replied the proprietor of the beautiful wax-works, with a look of disdain.

I made a move to depart, when one of the head showmen exclaimed, "Come, mister, don't be shabby; *can* you think of going without standing treat all round?"

"Why should I stand treat?" I asked.

"'Cause 'tain't every day you can meet such a bloody lot of jolly brother-showmen," replied Mr. Wax-works.

I handed out a crown, and left them to drink bad luck to the "foreign wagabonds what would bamboozle their Queen with inferior dwarfs, possessing no advantage over the 'natyves' but the power of chaffing."

L A I D F L A T

While in the showmen's vans seeking for acquisitions to my Museum in America, I was struck with the tall appearance of a couple of females who exhibited as the "Canadian giantesses, each seven feet in height." Suspecting that a cheat was hidden under their unfashionably long dresses, which reached to the floor and thus rendered their feet invisible, I attempted to solve the mystery by raising a foot or two of the superfluous covering. The strapping young lady, not relishing such liberties from a stranger, laid me flat upon the floor with a blow from her brawny hand. I was on my feet again in tolerably quick time, but not until I had discovered that she stood upon a pedestal at least eighteen inches high.

We returned to the hotel, took a post-chaise, and drove through decidedly the most lovely country I ever beheld. Since taking that tour, I have heard that two gentlemen once made a bet, each, that he could name the most delightful drive in England. Many persons were present, and the two gentlemen wrote on separate slips of paper the scene which he most admired. One gentleman wrote, "The road from Warwick to Coventry"; the other had written, "The road from Coventry to Warwick."

In less than an hour we were set down at the outer walls of Kenilworth castle, which Scott has greatly aided to immortalize in his celebrated novel of that name. This once noble and magnificent castle is now a stupendous ruin, which has been so often described that I think it unnecessary to say anything about it here. We spent half an hour in examining the interesting ruins, and then proceeded by post-chaise to Coventry, a distance of six or eight miles. Here we remained four hours, during which time we visited St. Mary's Hall, which has attracted the notice of many antiquaries. We also took our own "peep" at the effigy of the celebrated "Peeping Tom," after which we visited an exhibition called the "Happy Family," consisting of about two hundred birds and animals of opposite natures and propensities, all living in harmony together in one cage. This exhibition was so remarkable that I bought it and hired the

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

proprietor to accompany it to New York, and it became an attractive feature in my Museum.⁹

We took the cars the same evening for Birmingham, where we arrived at ten o'clock, Albert Smith remarking, that never before in his life had he accomplished a day's journey on the Yankee go-ahead principle. He afterwards published a chapter in "Bentley's Magazine"¹⁰ entitled "A Day with Barnum," in which he said we accomplished business with such rapidity, that when he attempted to write out the accounts of the day, he found the whole thing so confused in his brain that he came near locating "Peeping Tom" in the house of Shakespeare, while Guy of Warwick *would* stick his head above the ruins of Kenilworth, and the Warwick Vase appeared in Coventry.

⁹ According to the Museum advertisements, this might be "described as a community of Natural Enemies, living together in the most perfect harmony, and realizing the Scripture Prophecy that the Lion shall lie down with the Lamb." [Ed.]

¹⁰ For "Bentley's Magazine," one should read "Bentley's Miscellany"—founded (1837) by Richard Bentley, the English publisher; edited for its first three years by Dickens, whose "Oliver Twist" originally appeared in its pages. [Ed.]

CHAPTER XV

RETURN TO AMERICA

The Wizard of the North—A Juggler Beaten at His Own Tricks—The Simpsons in Europe—Reminiscences of Travel—Sauce and “Sass”—Tea Too Sweet—Roast Duck—Our Last Performance in Dublin—Daniel O’Connell—End of Our Tour—Departure for America—Arrival in New York.

WHILE I was at Aberdeen, in Scotland, I met Anderson, the “Wizard of the North.”¹ I had known him for a long time, and we were on familiar terms. The General’s exhibitions were to close on Saturday night, and Anderson was to open in the same hall on Monday evening. He came to our exhibition, and at the close we went to the hotel together to get a little supper. After supper we were having some fun and jokes together, when it occurred to Anderson to introduce me to several persons who were sitting in the room, as the “Wizard of the North,” at the same time asking me about my tricks and my forthcoming exhibition. He kept this up so persistently that some of our friends who were present declared that Anderson was “too much for me,” and, meanwhile, fresh introductions to strangers who came in, had made me pretty generally known in that circle as the “Wizard of the North,” who was to astonish the town in the following week. I accepted the situation at last, and said:

“Well, gentlemen, as I perform here for the first time, on Monday evening, I like to be liberal, and I should be very happy to give orders of admission to those of you who will attend my exhibition.”

¹ John Henry Anderson was a conjurer who introduced (1840) “spirit writing” and “spirit reading” into the repertory of magicians. [Ed.]

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The applications for orders were quite general, and I had written thirty or forty, when Anderson, who saw that I was in a fair way of filling his house with "dead-heads," cried out —

"Hold on! I am the 'Wizard of the North.' I'll stand the orders already given, but not another one."

Our friends, including the "Wizard" himself, began to think that I had rather the best of the joke.

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During my residence in London I made the acquaintance of an American, whom I will call Simpson, and his wife. They had originally been poor, and accustomed to pretty low society. Their opportunities for education had been limited, and they were what we should term vulgar, ignorant, common people. But by a turn of Fortune's wheel they became suddenly rich, and like some other fools who know nothing of their own country, they must rush to make the tour of Europe.

Mr. Simpson was an ignorant, good-natured fellow, fond of sporting large amounts of jewelry; was very social with Englishmen; always bragging of our "glorious country"; and was particularly given to boasting that he was once poor and now he was rich. Whenever he met Americans he was delighted, and insisted on the privilege of "standing treats" to all around, familiarly slapping on the back, and treating as an old chum, any American gentlemen, however refined, whom he might come in contact with.

Mrs. Simpson was a coarse woman, yet always studying politeness, and particularly the proper pronunciation of words. She was ever trying to appear refined; and she prided herself upon understanding all the rules of etiquette and fashion. She was continually purchasing new dresses and fashionable articles of apparel. She loaded herself down with diamonds and tawdry jewelry, and would frequently appear in the streets with six or eight different dresses in a day. But, strange to say, with all her pride and vanity with regard to being considered

MRS. SIMPSON EXCLAIMS

the perfection of refinement, she had an awful habit of using profane language! She really seemed to think this an evidence of good breeding. Perhaps she thought it a luxury which rich people were entitled to enjoy. This peculiarity occasionally led to most ludicrous scenes.

The Simpsons were from New England; and in their conversation they had the nasal Yankee twang, and the peculiar pronunciation of the illiterate class of the New England people.

Those who have heard John E. Owens in "Solon Shingle,"² are aware that preserved fruits are in New England called "sauce," by the vulgar pronounced "sass." But when Mrs. Simpson heard the word in England pronounced sauce, she was very anxious that John, her husband, should adopt the new pronunciation. He tried hard to learn, but would frequently forget himself and say "sass." Mrs. Simpson would lose her patience on such occasions, and reprove her husband sharply. Indeed, if he escaped without receiving some profane epithet from the lips of his would-be fashionable wife, it was a wonder.

On one occasion I happened to meet them at dinner with an English family in London, to whom I had, in the way of business, introduced them a few weeks previously. We had scarcely taken our seats at the table before Simpson happened to discover a dish of sweetmeats at the further corner of the table. Turning to the servant he said:

"Please pass me that sass."

Mrs. Simpson's eyes flashed indignantly, and she angrily exclaimed, almost in a scream:

"Say sauce; don't say 'sass.' I'd rather hear you say h——l a d——d sight!"

That our English hostess was amazed and shocked it is needless to say, although she preserved her equanimity better than could be expected. As for myself, I confess I could not

² Owens, an American comedian (1823-1886), made a great popular success as Solon Shingle in J. S. Jones' play "The People's Lawyer." [Ed.]

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refrain from laughing, which, of course, served only to increase the wrath of Mrs. Simpson.

Fourteen years subsequent to this event, I called on this English lady in company with an American friend. In the course of conversation, I happened to ask her if she remembered about Mrs. Simpson's "sass." She took from a drawer her memorandum book, and showed us the above expression verbatim, which, she said, she wrote down the same day it was uttered; and she added she had never been able to think of it since without laughing.

I met Simpson and his wife at a hotel in Marseilles, France, in the summer of 1845. Mrs. Simpson said she and Simpson had almost determined not to go to France at all when they "heard it was necessary to hire an interpreter to tell what folks said." Said she, "I told Simpson I didn't want to go among a set of folks who were such cussed fools they couldn't speak English! But of course we must go to France just for the speech of the people when we get home, so here we are. For my part," she continued, "I speak English to these Frenchmen anyhow, and if they can't understand me they can go without understanding. The other morning, I told the waiter my tea was too sweet. I found afterwards that too sweet [*toute de suite*] was French for 'very quick.'

" 'Oui, madame,' he replied, 'oui, oui, que voulez vous?' [What will you have?]

" 'Too sweet, too sweet,' I repeated, 'too sweet, too sweet.' Then I pointed to my tea, and said again, 'Too sweet, d——n your stupid head, can't you understand too sweet?' The fool jumped around like a hen with her head cut off, and kept saying, 'Oui, oui, madame, too sweet, qu'est-ce-que c'est?' [What is it?] Finally an English gentleman asked me what was the matter, and when I told him, he explained by telling me that too sweet [*toute de suite*] in French meant quick, very quick, and that was what made the stupid waiter jump around so."

"But d——n the French waiters," she continued, "I have

“ QUACK, QUACK ”

got quit of them finally, for I have found out a language we both understand.

“ The same day my tea was too sweet, Simpson was out at dinner time; and I went to the table alone. I called for soup, and the sap-heads brought me some sort of preserves. I then called for fish, and the fools could not understand me. Then I said, ‘ Bring me some chicken,’ and d——n ’em, they danced about in a quandary till I thought I should starve to death. But finally I thought of roast duck. I am dreadfully fond of duck, and I knew they always had stuffed ducks at dinner time. So I called to the waiter once more, and pointed to my plate and said, ‘ *Quack, quack, quack*, now do you understand?’ and the fool began to laugh, and said, ‘ Oui, madame, oui, oui,’ and off he ran, and soon brought me the nicest piece of duck you ever saw. So now every day at dinner, I say, ‘ *Quack, quack*,’ and I always get some first-rate duck.”

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We had visited nearly every city and town in France and Belgium, all the principal places in England³ and Scotland, besides going to Belfast and Dublin, in Ireland. I had several times met Daniel O’Connell in private life and in the Irish capital I heard him make an eloquent and powerful public Repeal speech in Conciliation Hall. In Dublin, after exhibit-

³ In the spring of 1846, while Tom Thumb was appearing at Egyptian Hall, the English historical painter Benjamin R. Haydon (b. 1786), friend of Wordsworth and Keats, was exhibiting in another room of the building his latest canvas, “ The Banishment of Aristides.” Crowds flocked to view the dwarf: “ They rush by thousands,” wrote Haydon in his journal, “ to see Tom Thumb. They push, they fight, they scream, they faint.” . . . Haydon’s exhibition, which he had hoped would free him from crowding debts, was sparsely attended — how sparsely may be learned from his own diary-record to the effect that in the preceding week 12,000 persons paid to see the General, whereas “ Aristides ” drew but 133½, the ½ being a little girl at half-price. In bitterness at this striking difference, the artist closed the exhibition. On June 22, 1846, he was found dead in his studio beside his uncompleted painting “ Alfred and the Trial by Jury.” Near him lay a razor and a pistol; and in his diary was this poignant final cry of a soul overborne by troubles: “ Stretch me no longer on this rough world.” [Ed.]

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ing a week in Rotunda Hall, our receipts on the last day were £261, or \$1,305, and the General also received £50, or \$250, for playing the same evening at the Theatre Royal. Thus closing a truly triumphant tour, we set sail for New York, arriving in February, 1847.⁴

⁴ In 1844 was issued, under the imprint of Thomas Brettell, the London printer and publisher and one of Barnum's good friends, a 24-page booklet entitled, "An Account of the Life, Personal Appearance, Character, and Manners, of Charles S. Stratton, The American Dwarf, Known as General Tom Thumb." . . . This contains extracts from the London "Times," "Morning Chronicle," and "Globe"; and it gives the General's birth-year as 1832. As a matter of fact, the General was born in 1838 (January 11); but in 1842, when he was only five years of age, he had been advertised by Barnum as eleven. Hence the artificial chronology, maintained for some years. [Ed.]

CHAPTER XVI

AT HOME

Renewing the Lease of the Museum Building — Tom Thumb in America — Tour through the Country — Barnum a Curiosity — Journey to Cuba — Ceasing to Be a Travelling Showman — Return to Bridgeport — Advantages and Capabilities of That City — Search for a Home — The Finding — Building and Completion of Iranistan — Grand House-Warming — Buying the Baltimore Museum — Opening the Philadelphia Museum — Catering for Quakers — The Temperance Pledge at the Theatre — Purchasing Peale's Philadelphia Collection — My Agricultural and Arboricultural Doings — "Gersy Blew" Chickens — How I Sold My Potatoes — How I Bought Other People's Potatoes — Cutting Off Grafts — My Deer Park — My Game-Keeper — Frank Leslie — Pleasures of Home.

ONE of my main objects in returning home at this time, was to obtain a longer lease of the premises occupied by the American Museum. My lease had still three years to run, but Mr. Olmsted, the proprietor of the building, was dead, and I was anxious to make provision in time for the perpetuity of my establishment, for I meant to make the Museum a permanent institution in the city, and if I could not renew my lease, I intended to build an appropriate edifice on Broadway. I finally succeeded, however, in getting the lease of the entire building, covering fifty-six feet by one hundred, for twenty-five years, at an annual rent of \$10,000 and the ordinary taxes and assessments. I had already hired in addition the upper stories of three adjoining buildings. My Museum receipts were more in one day than they formerly were in an entire week, and the establishment had become so popular that it was thronged at all hours, from early morning to closing time at night.

On my return, I promptly made use of General Tom Thumb's European reputation. He immediately appeared in

the American Museum, and for four weeks drew such crowds of visitors as had never been seen there before. He afterwards spent a month in Bridgeport, with his kindred. To prevent being annoyed by the curious, who would be sure to throng the houses of his relatives, he exhibited two days at Bridgeport. The receipts, amounting to several hundred dollars, were presented to the Bridgeport Charitable Society. The Bridgeporters were much delighted to see their old friend "little Charlie" again. They little thought, when they saw him playing about the streets a few years previously, that he was destined to create such a sensation among the crowned heads of the old world; and now, returning with his European reputation, he was, of course, a great curiosity to his former acquaintances, as well as to the public generally. His Bridgeport friends found that he had not increased in size during the four and a half years of his absence, but they discovered that he had become sharp and witty, "abounding in foreign airs and native graces"; in fact, that he was quite unlike the little, diffident country fellow whom they had formerly known.

"We never thought Charlie much of a phenomenon when he lived among us," said one of the first citizens of the place, "but now that he has become 'Barnumized,' he is a rare curiosity."

But there was really no mystery about it; the whole change made by training and travel, had appeared to me by degrees, and it came to the citizens of Bridgeport suddenly. The terms upon which I first engaged the lad showed that I had no over-sanguine expectations of his success as a "speculation." When I saw, however, that he was wonderfully popular, I took the greatest pains to engraft upon his native talent all the instruction he was capable of receiving. He was an apt pupil, and I provided for him the best of teachers. Travel and attrition with so many people in so many lands did the rest. The General left America three years before, a diffident, uncultivated little boy; he came back an educated, accomplished little man.

A NEW ARRANGEMENT

He had seen much, and had profited much. He went abroad poor, and he came home rich.

On January 1, 1845, my engagement with the General at a salary ceased, and we made a new arrangement by which we were equal partners, the General, or his father for him, taking one-half of the profits. A reservation, however, was made of the first four weeks after our arrival in New York, during which he was to exhibit at my Museum for two hundred dollars. When we returned to America, the General's father had acquired a handsome fortune,¹ and settling a large sum upon the little General personally, he placed the balance at interest, secured by bond and mortgage, excepting thirty thousand dollars, with which he purchased land near the city limits of Bridgeport, and erected a large and substantial mansion, where he resided till the day of his death, and in which his only two daughters were married, one in 1850, the other in 1853. His only son, besides the General, was born in 1851. All the family, except "little Charlie," are of the usual size.

After spending a month in visiting his friends, it was determined that the General and his parents should travel through the United States. I agreed to accompany them, with occasional intervals of rest at home, for one year, sharing the profits equally, as in England. We proceeded to Washington city, where the General held his levees in April, 1847, visiting President Polk and lady at the White House—thence to Richmond, returning to Baltimore and Philadelphia. Our receipts in Philadelphia in twelve days were \$5,594.91. The tour for the entire year realized about the same average. The expenses were from twenty-five dollars to thirty dollars per day. From Philadelphia we went to Boston, Lowell, and Prov-

¹ Wood, in his "Giants and Dwarfs" (1868), gives this bit of intelligence, unconfirmed and rather circuitously arrived at (pp. 417-418): "A London newspaper of September 18th, 1847, says: 'Tom Thumb's secretary has furnished one of the American papers with a statement of his receipts in Europe, which are said to have amounted to 150,000*l.* sterling.' " [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

idence. Our receipts on one day in the latter city were \$976.97. We then visited New Bedford, Fall River, Salem, Worcester, Springfield, Albany, Troy, Niagara Falls, Buffalo, and intermediate places, and in returning to New York we stopped at the principal towns on the Hudson River. After this we visited New Haven, Hartford, Portland, Me., and intermediate towns.

I was surprised to find that, during my long absence abroad, I had become almost as much of a curiosity to my patrons as I was to the spinster from Maine who once came to see me and to attend the "services" in my Lecture Room. If I showed myself about the Museum or wherever else I was known, I found eyes peering and fingers pointing at me, and could frequently overhear the remark, "There's Barnum." On one occasion soon after my return, I was sitting in the ticket-office reading a newspaper. A man came and purchased a ticket of admission. "Is Mr. Barnum in the Museum?" he asked. The ticket-seller, pointing to me, answered, "This is Mr. Barnum." Supposing the gentleman had business with me, I looked up from the paper. "Is this Mr. Barnum?" he asked. "It is," I replied. He stared at me for a moment, and then, throwing down his ticket, exclaimed, "It's all right; I have got the worth of my money"; and away he went, without going into the Museum at all!

In November, 1847, we started for Havana, taking the steamer from New York to Charleston, where the General exhibited, as well as at Columbia, Augusta, Savannah, Milledgeville, Macon, Columbus, Montgomery, Mobile, and New Orleans. At this latter city we remained three weeks, including Christmas and New Year's. We arrived in Havana by the schooner "Adams Gray," in January, 1848, and were introduced to the Captain-General and the Spanish nobility. We remained a month in Havana and Matanzas, the General proving an immense favorite. In Havana he was the especial pet of Count Santovania. In Matanzas we were very much indebted to the kindness of a princely American merchant, Mr. Brinker-

A NEW RESIDENCE

hoff. Mr. J. S. Thrasher, the American patriot and gentleman, was also of great assistance to us, and placed me under deep obligations.

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From Havana we went to New Orleans, where we remained several days, and from New Orleans we proceeded to St. Louis, stopping at the principal towns on the Mississippi river, and returning *via* Louisville, Cincinnati, and Pittsburgh. We reached the latter city early in May, 1848. From this point it was agreed between Mr. Stratton and myself, that I should go home and henceforth travel no more with the little General. I had competent agents who could exhibit him without my personal assistance, and I preferred to relinquish a portion of the profits, rather than continue to be a travelling showman. I had now been a straggler from home most of the time for thirteen years, and I cannot describe the feelings of gratitude with which I reflected, that having by the most arduous toil and deprivations succeeded in securing a satisfactory competence, I should henceforth spend my days in the bosom of my family. I was fully determined that no pecuniary temptation should again induce me to forego the enjoyments to be secured only in the circle of home. I reached my residence in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in the latter part of May, rejoiced to find my family and friends in good health, and delighted to find myself once more at home.

My new home, which was then nearly ready for occupancy, was the well-known Iranistan. More than two years had been employed in building this beautiful residence. In 1846, finding that fortune was continuing to favor me, I began to look forward eagerly to the time when I could withdraw from the whirlpool of business excitement and settle down permanently with my family, to pass the remainder of my days in comparative rest.

I wished to reside within a few hours of New York. I had never seen more delightful locations than there are upon the

borders of Long Island Sound, between New Rochelle, New York, and New Haven, Connecticut; and my attention was therefore turned in that direction. Bridgeport seemed to be about the proper distance from the great metropolis. It is pleasantly situated at the terminus of two railroads, which traverse the fertile valleys of the Naugatuck and Housatonic rivers. The New York and New Haven Railroad runs through the city, and there is also daily steamboat communication with New York. The enterprise which characterized the city, seemed to mark it as destined to become the first in the State in size and opulence; and I was not long in deciding, with the concurrence of my wife, to fix our future residence in that vicinity.

I accordingly purchased seventeen acres of land, less than a mile west of the city, and fronting with a good view upon the Sound. Although nominally in Bridgeport, my property was really in Fairfield, a few rods west of the Bridgeport line. In deciding upon the kind of house to be erected, I determined, first and foremost, to consult convenience and comfort. I cared little for style, and my wife cared still less; but as we meant to have a good house, it might as well, at the same time, be unique. In this, I confess, I had "an eye to business," for I thought that a pile of buildings of a novel order might indirectly serve as an advertisement of my Museum.

In visiting Brighton, in England, I had been greatly pleased with the Pavilion erected by George IV.² It was the only specimen of Oriental architecture in England, and the style had not been introduced into America. I concluded to adopt it, and engaged a London architect to furnish me a set of drawings after the general plan of the Pavilion, differing sufficiently to be adapted to the spot of ground selected for my homestead. On my second return visit to the United States, I brought these drawings with me and engaged a competent architect and builder, giving him instructions to proceed with the work, not "by the job" but "by the day," and to spare neither time nor expense in erecting a comfortable, convenient, and tasteful resi-

² In 1784-1787. [Ed.]

“REGARDLESS OF EXPENSE”

dence. The work was thus begun and continued while I was still abroad, and during the time when I was making my tour with General Tom Thumb through the United States and Cuba. New and magnificent avenues were opened in the vicinity of my property. The building progressed slowly, but surely and substantially. Elegant and appropriate furniture was made expressly for every room in the house. I erected expensive water works to supply the premises. The stables, conservatories, and out-buildings were perfect in their kind. There was a profusion of trees set out on the grounds. The whole was built and established literally “regardless of expense,” for I had no desire even to ascertain the entire cost. All I cared to know was that it suited me, and that would have been a small consideration with me if it had not also suited my family.

The whole was finally completed to my satisfaction. My family removed into the premises, and, on the fourteenth of November, 1848, nearly one thousand invited guests, including the poor and the rich, helped us in the old-fashioned custom of “house-warming.”

When the name “Iranistan” was announced, a waggish New York editor syllabled it, I-ran-i-stan, and gave as the interpretation, that “I ran a long time before I could stan’!” Literally, however, the name signifies, “Eastern Country Place,” or, more poetically, “Oriental Villa.”³

The plot of ground upon which Iranistan was erected, was

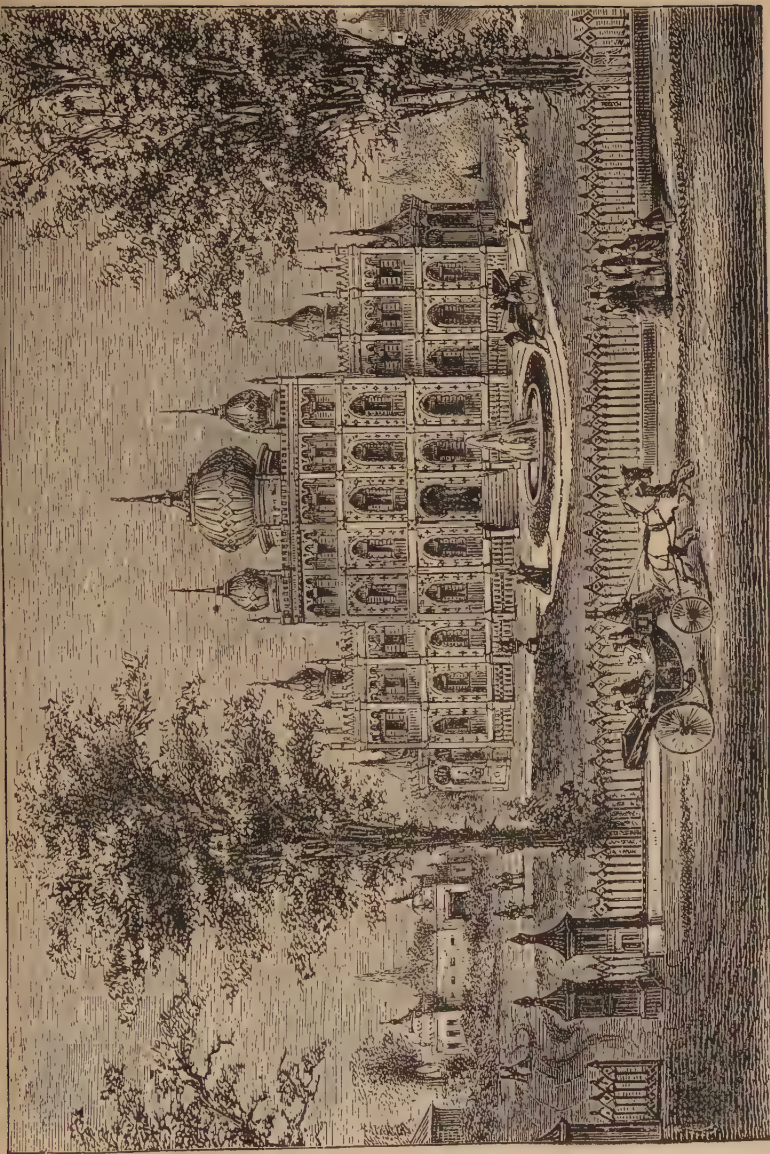
³ “Sights and Wonders in New York” (1849), designed to advertise the American Museum (“this magnificent establishment, embracing among its six hundred thousand curiosities, all that is rare and wonderful in the world of nature, or unique and striking in the world of art”), treats expansively of the new mansion, which is described as “of a composite order, of the Byzantine, Moorish, and Turkish styles of architecture.” The three-storied main building was surmounted by a “central dome” and by “minarets of the most elegant appearance.” The niches of the great staircase were “embellished with marble statuary imported from Florence.” Furniture was of rosewood; “curtains, drapery, statuary, mantel ornaments, clocks, &c.” were “of unique elegance.” In the dome was an observatory “sixty feet in circumference, and fitted up with peculiar and effective taste.” The “bijou apartment of the villa” was “Mr. Barnum’s private study, the walls and ceiling of which are hung with the richest orange

at the date of my purchase, in March, 1846, a bare field. But I transplanted many hundreds of fruit and forest trees, some of the latter of very large growth when they were moved, and thus in a few years my premises were adorned with what, in the ordinary process of growth, would have required a whole generation. I have never waited for my trees to grow, if money would transplant them of nearly full growth at the start.

The years 1848 and 1849 were mainly spent with my family, though I went every week to New York to look after the interests of the American Museum. While I was in Europe, in 1845, my agent, Mr. Fordyce Hitchcock, had bought out for me the Baltimore Museum, a fully-supplied establishment, in full operation, and I placed it under the charge of my uncle, Alanson Taylor. He died in 1846, and I then sold the Baltimore Museum to the "Orphean Family," by whom it was subsequently transferred to Mr. John E. Owens, the celebrated comedian. After my return from Europe, I opened, in 1849, a Museum in Dr. Swain's fine building, at the corner of Chestnut and Seventh streets, in Philadelphia.

This was in all respects a first-class establishment. It was elegantly fitted up, and contained, among other things, a dozen fine large paintings, such as "The Deluge," "Cain and his Family," and other similar subjects which I had ordered copied, when I was in Paris, from paintings in the gallery of the Louvre. There was also a complete and valuable collection of curiosities and I sent from New York, from time to time, my transient novelties in the way of giants, dwarfs, fat boys, animals, and other attractions. There was a lecture room and stage for dramatic entertainments; but I was catering for a Quaker population, and was careful to introduce or permit nothing which could possibly be objectionable. While the Museum contained such wax-works as "The Temperate Family," "The Intemperate

satin, with curtains and furniture of corresponding elegance." As for the grounds, they were "interspersed with flower-beds of every device"; and the general effect was "greatly heightened by the splendid fountains, and the elegant iron fence." [Ed.]



IRANISTAN

Here Barnum lived from November 1848 to December 1857. "Did you know, Mr. Barnum," asked Jenny Lind, "that if you had not built Iranistan, I should never have come to America for you?" (From the 1869 "Struggles and Triumphs.")

IN THE "QUAKER CITY"

Family," and Mrs. Pelby's representation of "The Last Supper," the theatre presented "The Drunkard" and other moral dramas. The most respectable people in the city patronized the Museum and attended the theatre. "The Drunkard" was exceedingly well played and it made a great impression. There was a temperance pledge in the box-office, which was signed by thousands during the run of the piece. Almost every hour during the day and evening, women could be seen bringing their husbands to the Museum to sign the pledge.

I stayed in Philadelphia long enough to identify myself with this Museum and to successfully start the enterprise, and then left it in the hands of different managers who profitably conducted it till 1851, when, finding that it occupied too much of my time and attention, I sold it to Mr. Clapp Spooner for \$40,000. At the end of that year, the building and contents were destroyed by fire. The loss was a serious one to Philadelphia, and the people were very desirous that Mr. Spooner should rebuild the establishment; but a highly profitable business connection with the Adams Express Company prevented him from doing so.

While my Philadelphia Museum was in full operation Peale's Museum ran me a strong opposition at the Masonic Hall. That enterprise proved disastrous, and I purchased the collection at sheriff's sale, for five or six thousand dollars, on joint account of my friend Moses Kimball and myself. The curiosities were equally divided, one-half going to his Boston Museum and the other half to my American Museum in New York.

In 1848 I was elected President of the Fairfield County Agricultural Society in Connecticut. Although not practically a farmer, I had purchased about one hundred acres of land in the vicinity of my residence, and felt and still feel a deep interest in the cause of agriculture. I had begun by importing some blooded stock for Iranistan, and, as I was at one time attacked by the "hen fever," I erected several splendid poultry-houses on my grounds. These were built for me by a carpenter who wrote an application for a situation, sending me a frightfully

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

misspelled letter, in which he said that he was "youste" to hard work. I thought if his work was as strong as his spelling, he was the man I wanted, and I employed him. When the time came to prepare for our agricultural fair in the fall, he made a series of gorgeous cages in which to exhibit my shanghais, bantams, and other fancy fowls. I went out to see them before they were sent away, and was horrified to find that he had marked the cages in his own peculiar style, describing my "Jersey Blues," for instance, in startling capitals as "Gersy Blews." I called for a jack-plane to remove every mark on the cages and told the astonished carpenter that he might do anything in the world for me, except to spell.⁴

In 1849 it was determined by the Society that I should deliver the annual address. I begged to be excused on the ground of incompetency, but my excuses were of no avail, and as I could not instruct my auditors in farming, I gave them the benefit of several mistakes which I had committed. Among other things, I told them that in the fall of 1848 my head gardener reported that I had fifty bushels of potatoes to spare. I thereupon directed him to barrel them up and ship them to New York for sale. He did so, and received two dollars per barrel, or about sixty-seven cents per bushel. But, unfortunately, after the potatoes had been shipped, I found that my gardener had selected all the largest for market, and left my family nothing but "small potatoes" to live on during the winter. But the worst is still to come. My potatoes were all gone before March, and I was obliged to buy, during the spring, over fifty bushels of potatoes, at \$1.25 per bushel! I also related my first experiment in the arboricultural line, when I

⁴ "... One day he wandered through the animal house at the winter quarters in Bridgeport. He had very little to say to anyone and did not seem particularly interested in the animals.

"He stopped before several of the cages and, pointing to the name plate, squeaked out, 'That ain't spelled right.'

"In spite of his criticism the spellings were never altered, as the managers of the show preferred to have the names agree with Webster rather than Barnum."
— Conklin and Root: "The Ways of the Circus" (1921). [Ed.]

A DISCOVERY

cut from two thrifty rows of young cherry-trees any quantity of what I supposed to be "suckers" or "sprouts," and was thereafter informed by my gardener that I had cut off all his grafts!

A friend of mine, Mr. James D. Johnson, lived in a fine house a quarter of a mile west of Iranistan, and as I owned several acres of land at the corner of two streets directly adjoining his homestead, I surrounded the ground with high pickets, and introducing a number of Rocky Mountain elk, reindeer, and American deer, I converted it into a deer park. Strangers passing by would naturally suppose that it belonged to Johnson's estate, and to render the illusion more complete, his son-in-law, Mr. S. H. Wales, of the "Scientific American," placed a sign in the park, fronting on the street, and reading:

"ALL PERSONS ARE FORBID TRESPASSING ON THESE
GROUNDS, OR DISTURBING THE DEER. J. D. JOHNSON."

I "acknowledged the corn," and was much pleased with the joke. Johnson was delighted, and bragged considerably of having got ahead of Barnum, and the sign remained undisturbed for several days. It happened at length that a party of friends came to visit him from New York, arriving in the evening. Johnson told them he had got a capital joke on Barnum; he would not explain, but said they should see it for themselves the next morning. Bright and early he led them into the street, and after conducting them a proper distance, wheeled them around in front of the sign. To his dismay he discovered that I had added directly under his name the words, "*Game-keeper to P. T. Barnum.*" His friends, as soon as they understood the joke, enjoyed it mightily, but it was said that neighbor Johnson laughed out of "the wrong side of his mouth."

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During the year 1848, Mr. Frank Leslie, since so widely known as the publisher of several illustrated journals, came to

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me with letters of introduction from London, and I employed him to get up for me an illustrated catalogue of my Museum. This he did in a splendid manner, and hundreds of thousands of copies were sold and distributed far and near, thus adding greatly to the renown of the establishment.⁵

I count these two years — 1848 and 1849 — among the happiest of my life. I had enough to do in the management of my business, and yet I seemed to have plenty of leisure hours to pass with my family and friends in my beautiful home of Iranistan.

⁵ Henry Carter, *alias* Frank Leslie (1821-1880), established "Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper" (in 1855) — which as "Leslie's Weekly" survived into the twentieth century — and a monthly magazine, both widely read in their day. [Ed.]

CHAPTER XVII

THE JENNY LIND ENTERPRISE

Grand Scheme — Congress of All Nations — A Bold and Brilliant Enterprise — The Jenny Lind Engagement — My Agent in Europe — His Instructions — Correspondence with Miss Lind — Benedict and Belletti — Joshua Bates — Chevalier Wyckoff — The Contract Signed — My Reception of the News — The Entire Sum of Money for the Engagement Sent to London — My First Lind Letter to the Public — A Poor Portrait — Musical Notes in Wall Street — A Friend in Need.

MANY of my most fortunate enterprises have fairly startled me by the magnitude of their success. When my sanguine hopes predicted a steady flow of fortune, I have been inundated; when I calculated upon making a curious public pay me liberally for a meritorious article, I have often found the same public eager to deluge me with compensation. Yet, I never believed in mere luck and I always pitied the simpleton who relies on luck for his success. Luck is in no sense the foundation of my fortune; from the beginning of my career I planned and worked for my success. To be sure, my schemes often amazed me with the affluence of their results, and, arriving at the very best, I sometimes "builded better than" I "knew."

For a long time I had been incubating a plan for an extraordinary exhibition which I was sure would be a success and would excite universal attention and commendation in America and abroad. This was nothing less than a "Congress of Nations" — an assemblage of representatives of all the nations that could be reached by land or sea. I meant to secure a man and woman, as perfect as could be procured, from every accessible people, civilized and barbarous, on the face of the globe. I had actually contracted with an agent to go to Europe to make arrangements to secure "specimens" for such a show. Even now,

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I can conceive of no exhibition which would be more interesting and which would appeal more generally to all classes of patrons. As it was, and while positively preparing for such a congress, it occurred to me that another great enterprise could be undertaken at less risk, with far less real trouble, and with more remunerative results.

And now I come to speak of an undertaking which my worst enemy will admit was bold in its conception, complete in its development, and astounding in its success. It was an enterprise never before or since equalled in managerial annals. As I recall it now, I almost tremble at the seeming temerity of the attempt. That I am proud of it I freely confess. It placed me before the world in a new light; it gained me many warm friends in new circles; it was in itself a fortune to me — I risked much but I made more.

It was in October, 1849, that I conceived the idea of bringing Jenny Lind to this country.¹ I had never heard her sing, inasmuch as she arrived in London a few weeks after I left that city with General Tom Thumb. Her reputation, however, was sufficient for me. I usually jump at conclusions, and almost invariably find that my first impressions are correct. It struck me, when I first thought of this speculation, that if properly managed it must prove immensely profitable, provided I could engage the "Swedish Nightingale" on any terms within the range of reason. As it was a great undertaking, I considered the matter seriously for several days, and all my "cipherings" and calculations gave but one result — immense success.

Reflecting that very much would depend upon the manner in

¹ Jenny Lind, born at Stockholm in 1820, received her first musical training at the Royal Theatre of that city, and made her operatic debut as Agatha in "Der Freischütz." She studied in Paris with Garcia in 1841-1842; after two years in Denmark and Sweden, sang in Germany and at Vienna in 1844-1847; in 1847-1849 repeated in England her Continental successes. At the time when Barnum decided upon trying to bring her to America, she was a veritable popular idol, admired at once for her voice, her personality, and her liberal charities. The critics of many countries had sung her praises, and her art had impressed such musicians as Meyerbeer, Chopin, Berlioz, Mendelssohn (who wrote for her the oratorio "Elijah"), Wagner, Schubert. [Ed.]

A SURE CARD

which she should be brought before the public, I saw that my task would be an exceedingly arduous one. It was possible, I knew, that circumstances might occur which would make the enterprise disastrous. "The public" is a very strange animal, and although a good knowledge of human nature will generally lead a caterer of amusements to hit the people, they are fickle, and oftentimes perverse. A slight misstep in the management of a public entertainment, frequently wrecks the most promising enterprise. But I had marked the "divine Jenny" as a sure card, and to secure the prize I began to cast about for a competent agent.

I found in Mr. John Hall Wilton, an Englishman who had visited this country with the Sax-Horn players,² the best man whom I knew for that purpose. A few minutes sufficed to make the arrangement with him, by which I was to pay but little more than his expenses if he failed in his mission, but by which also he was to be paid a large sum if he succeeded in bringing Jenny Lind to our shores, on any terms within a liberal schedule which I set forth to him in writing.

On the 6th of November, 1849, I furnished Wilton with the necessary documents, including a letter of general instructions which he was at liberty to exhibit to Jenny Lind and to any other musical notables whom he thought proper, and a private letter, containing hints and suggestions not embodied in the former. I also gave him letters of introduction to my bankers, Messrs. Baring Brothers & Co., of London, as well as to many friends in England and France.

The sum of all my instructions, public and private, to Wilton amounted to this: He was to engage her on shares, if possible. I, however, authorized him to engage her at any rate, not exceeding one thousand dollars a night, for any number of nights up to one hundred and fifty, with all her expenses, including servants, carriages, secretary, etc., besides also engaging such musical assistants, not exceeding three in number, as she should

² The sax-horn, an instrument of the trumpet variety, was invented by Adolphe Sax, a gentleman likewise responsible for the saxophone. [Ed.]

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select, let the terms be what they might. If necessary, I should place the entire amount of money named in the engagement in the hands of London bankers before she sailed. Wilton's compensation was arranged on a kind of sliding scale, to be governed by the terms which he made for me — so that the farther he kept below my utmost limits, the better he should be paid for making the engagements. He proceeded to London, and opened a correspondence with Miss Lind, who was then on the Continent. He learned from the tenor of her letters, that if she could be induced to visit America at all, she must be accompanied by Mr. Julius Benedict,³ the accomplished composer, pianist, and musical director, and also she was impressed with the belief that Signor Belletti, the fine baritone, would be of essential service. Wilton therefore at once called upon Mr. Benedict and also Signor Belletti, who were both then in London, and in numerous interviews was enabled to learn the terms on which they would consent to engage to visit this country with Miss Lind. Having obtained the information desired, he proceeded to Lübeck, in Germany, to seek an interview with Miss Lind herself. Upon arriving at her hotel, he sent in his card, requesting her to specify an hour for an interview. She named the following morning, and he was punctual to the appointment.

In the course of the first conversation, she frankly told him that during the time occupied by their correspondence, she had written to friends in London, including my friend Mr. Joshua Bates, of the house of Baring Brothers, and had informed herself respecting my character, capacity, and responsibility, which she assured him were quite satisfactory. She informed him, however, that at that time there were four persons anxious to negotiate with her for an American tour. One of these gentlemen was a well-known opera manager in London; another, a theatrical manager in Manchester; a third, a musical composer

³ Benedict (later Sir Julius, 1804-1885), of German birth, made his home in England, where he was known not only as a pianist and conductor but also as a composer of cantatas, oratorios, and operas. [Ed.]

FULLY RELIABLE

and conductor of the orchestra of Her Majesty's Opera in London; and the fourth, Chevalier Wyckoff, a person who had conducted a successful speculation some years previously by visiting America in charge of the celebrated danseuse, Fanny Ellsler. Several of these parties had called upon her personally, and Wyckoff, upon hearing my name, attempted to deter her from making any engagement with me, by assuring her that I was a mere showman, and that, for the sake of making money by the speculation, I would not scruple to put her into a box and exhibit her through the country at twenty-five cents a head.

This, she confessed, somewhat alarmed her, and she wrote to Mr. Bates on the subject. He entirely disabused her mind, by assuring her that he knew me personally, and that in treating with me she was not dealing with an "adventurer" who might make her remuneration depend entirely upon the success of the enterprise, but I was able to carry out all my engagements, let them prove never so unprofitable, and she could place the fullest reliance upon my honor and integrity.⁴

"Now," said she to Mr. Wilton, "I am perfectly satisfied on that point, for I know the world pretty well, and am aware how far jealousy and envy will sometimes carry persons; and as those who are trying to treat with me are all anxious that I should participate in the profits or losses of the enterprise, I much prefer treating with you, since your principal is willing to assume all the responsibility, and take the entire management and chances of the result upon himself."

⁴ In the 1855 "Life," Barnum wrote that, having taken everything into account, he "arrived at the following conclusions":

"1st. The chances were greatly in favor of immense pecuniary success; and 2d. Inasmuch as my name has long been associated with 'humbug,' and the American public suspect that my capacities do not extend beyond the power to exhibit a stuffed monkey-skin or a dead mermaid, I can afford to lose fifty thousand dollars in such an enterprise as bringing to this country, in the zenith of her life and celebrity, the greatest musical wonder in the world, provided the engagement is carried out with credit to the management.

"I thought that the sum above named would be amply sufficient to cover all possible loss, and, caring little for the personal anxiety and labor which I must necessarily encounter, I cast about for the purpose of finding the proper agent to dispatch to Europe to engage the 'divine Jenny,' if possible." [Ed.]

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Several interviews ensued, during which she learned from Wilton that he had settled with Messrs. Benedict and Belletti, in regard to the amount of their salaries, provided the engagement was concluded, and in the course of a week, Mr. Wilton and Miss Lind had arranged the terms and conditions on which she was ready to conclude the negotiations. As these terms were within the limits fixed in my private letter of instructions, the following agreement was duly drawn in triplicate, and signed by herself and Wilton, at Lübeck, January 9, 1850; and the signatures of Messrs. Benedict and Belletti were affixed in London a few days afterwards:

Memorandum of an agreement entered into this ninth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty, between John Hall Wilton, as agent of Phineas T. Barnum, of New York, in the United States of North America, of the one part, and Mademoiselle Jenny Lind, Vocalist, of Stockholm in Sweden, of the other part, wherein the said Jenny Lind doth agree,

1st. To sing for the said Phineas T. Barnum in one hundred and fifty concerts, including oratorios, within (if possible) one year or eighteen months from the date of her arrival in the city of New York — the said concerts to be given in the United States of North America and Havana. She, the said Jenny Lind, having full control as to the number of nights or concerts in each week, and the number of pieces in which she will sing in each concert, to be regulated conditionally with her health and safety of voice, but the former never less than one or two, nor the latter less than four; but in no case to appear in operas.

2d. In consideration of said services the said John Hall Wilton, as agent for the said Phineas T. Barnum of New York, agrees to furnish the said Jenny Lind with a servant as waiting-maid, and a male servant to and for the sole service of her and her party; to pay the travelling and hotel expenses of a friend to accompany her as a companion; to pay also a secretary to superintend her finances; to pay all her and her party's travelling expenses from Europe, and during the tour in the United States of North America and Havana; to pay all hotel expenses for board and lodging during the same period; to place at her disposal in

THE AGREEMENT

each city a carriage and horses with their necessary attendants, and to give her in addition the sum of two hundred pounds sterling, or one thousand dollars, for each concert or oratorio in which the said Jenny Lind shall sing.

3d. And the said John Hall Wilton, as agent for the said Phineas T. Barnum, doth further agree to give the said Jenny Lind the most satisfactory security and assurance for the full amount of her engagement, which shall be placed in the hands of Messrs. Baring Brothers of London previous to the departure and subject to the order of the said Jenny Lind, with its interest due on its current reduction, by her services in the concerts or oratorios.

4th. And the said John Hall Wilton, on the part of the said Phineas T. Barnum, further agrees, that should the said Phineas T. Barnum, after seventy-five concerts, have realized so much as shall, after paying all current expenses, have returned to him all the sums disbursed, either as deposits at interest, for securities of salaries, preliminary outlay, or moneys in any way expended consequent on this engagement, and in addition, have gained a clear profit of at least fifteen thousand pounds sterling, then the said Phineas T. Barnum will give the said Jenny Lind, in addition to the former sum of one thousand dollars current money of the United States of North America, nightly, one fifth part of the profits arising from the remaining seventy-five concerts or oratorios, after deducting every expense current and appertaining thereto; or the said Jenny Lind agrees to try with the said Phineas T. Barnum fifty concerts or oratorios on the aforesaid and first-named terms, and if then found to fall short of the expectations of the said Phineas T. Barnum, then the said Jenny Lind agrees to reorganize this agreement, on terms quoted in his first proposal, as set forth in the annexed copy of his letter; but should such be found unnecessary, then the engagement continues up to seventy-five concerts or oratorios, at the end of which, should the aforesaid profit of fifteen thousand pounds sterling have not been realized, then the engagement shall continue as at first — the sums herein, after expenses for Julius Benedict and Giovanni Belletti, to remain unaltered except for advancement.

5th. And the said John Hall Wilton, agent for the said Phineas T. Barnum, at the request of the said Jenny Lind, agrees to pay to Julius

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

Benedict, of London, to accompany the said Jenny Lind as musical director, pianist, and superintendent of the musical department, also to assist the said Jenny Lind in one hundred and fifty concerts or oratorios, to be given in the United States of North America and Havana, the sum of five thousand pounds (£5,000) sterling, to be satisfactorily secured to him with Messrs. Baring Brothers, of London, previous to his departure from Europe; and the said John Hall Wilton agrees further, for the said Phineas T. Barnum, to pay all his travelling expenses from Europe, together with his hotel and travelling expenses during the time occupied in giving the aforesaid one hundred and fifty concerts or oratorios — he, the said Julius Benedict, to superintend the organization of oratorios, if required.

6th. And the said John Hall Wilton, at the request, selection, and for the aid of the said Jenny Lind, agrees to pay to Giovanni Belletti, baritone vocalist, to accompany the said Jenny Lind during her tour and in one hundred and fifty concerts or oratorios in the United States of North America and Havana, and in conjunction with the aforesaid Julius Benedict, the sum of two thousand five hundred pounds (£2,500) sterling, to be satisfactorily secured to him previous to his departure from Europe, in addition to all his hotel and travelling expenses.

7th. And it is further agreed that the said Jenny Lind shall be at full liberty to sing at any time she may think fit for charitable institutions or purposes independent of the engagement with the said Phineas T. Barnum, she, the said Jenny Lind, consulting with the said Phineas T. Barnum with a view to mutually agreeing as to the time and its propriety, it being understood that in no case shall the first or second concert in any city selected for the tour be for such purpose, or wherever it shall appear against the interests of the said Phineas T. Barnum.

8th. It is further agreed that should the said Jenny Lind by any act of God be incapacitated to fulfil the entire engagement before mentioned, that an equal proportion of the terms agreed upon shall be given to the said Jenny Lind, Julius Benedict, and Giovanni Belletti, for services rendered to that time.

9th. It is further agreed and understood, that the said Phineas T. Barnum shall pay every expense appertaining to the concerts or oratorios

“OUR HAND AND SEAL”

before mentioned, excepting those for charitable purposes, and that all accounts shall be settled and rendered by all parties weekly.

10th. And the said Jenny Lind further agrees that she will not engage to sing for any other person during the progress of this said engagement with the said Phineas T. Barnum, of New York, for one hundred and fifty concerts or oratorios, excepting for charitable purposes as before mentioned; and all travelling to be first and best class.

In witness hereof to the within written memorandum of agreement we set hereunto our hand and seal.



JOHN HALL WILTON, Agent for Phineas T.
Barnum, of New York, U. S.



A large, elegant, cursive signature of Jenny Lind, written in dark ink.



JULIUS BENEDICT.



GIOVANNI BELLETTI.

In the presence of C. ACHILLING, Consul of His Majesty the King
of Sweden and Norway.

*Extract from a Letter addressed to John Hall Wilton by Phineas T.
Barnum, and referred to in paragraph No. 4 of the annexed agree-
ment.*

NEW YORK, November 6th, 1849.

MR. J. HALL WILTON:

SIR: — In reply to your proposal to attempt a negotiation with Mlle. Jenny Lind to visit the United States professionally, I propose to enter into an arrangement with her to the following effect: I will engage to pay all her expenses from Europe, provide for and pay for one principal tenor and one pianist, their salaries not exceeding together one hundred

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and fifty dollars per night; to support for her a carriage, two servants, and a friend to accompany her and superintend her finances. I will furthermore pay all and every expense appertaining to her appearance before the public, and give her half of the gross receipts arising from concerts or operas. I will engage to travel with her personally and attend to the arrangements, provided she will undertake to give not less than eighty nor more than one hundred and fifty concerts, or nights' performances.

Phineas T. Barnum

I certify the above to be a true extract from the letter.

J. H. WILTON.

I was at my Museum in Philadelphia when Wilton arrived in New York, February 19, 1850. He immediately telegraphed to me, in the cipher we had agreed upon, that he had signed an engagement with Jenny Lind, by which she was to commence her concerts in America in the following September. I was somewhat startled by this sudden announcement; and feeling that the time to elapse before her arrival was so long that it would be policy to keep the engagement private for a few months, I immediately telegraphed him not to mention it to any person, and that I would meet him the next day in New York.

When we reflect how thoroughly Jenny Lind, her musical powers, her character, and wonderful successes, were subsequently known by all classes in this country as well as throughout the civilized world, it is difficult to realize that, at the time this engagement was made, she was comparatively unknown on this side the water. We can hardly credit the fact that millions of persons in America had never heard of her, that other millions had merely read her name, but had no distinct idea of who or what she was. Only a small portion of the public were really aware of her great musical triumphs in the Old World, and this portion was confined almost entirely to musical people,

PREPARATORY WORK

travellers who had visited the Old World, and the conductors of the press.

The next morning I started for New York. On arriving at Princeton we met the New York cars, and purchasing the morning papers, I was surprised to find in them a full account of my engagement with Jenny Lind. However, this premature announcement could not be recalled, and I put the best face on the matter. Anxious to learn how this communication would strike the public mind, I informed the conductor, whom I well knew, that I had made an engagement with Jenny Lind, and that she would surely visit this country in the following August.

"Jenny Lind! Is she a dancer?" asked the conductor.

I informed him who and what she was, but his question had chilled me as if his words were ice. Really, thought I, if this is all that a man in the capacity of a railroad conductor between Philadelphia and New York knows of the greatest songstress in the world, I am not sure that six months will be too long a time for me to occupy in enlightening the public in regard to her merits.

I had an interview with Wilton, and learned from him that, in accordance with the agreement, it would be requisite for me to place the entire amount stipulated, \$187,500, in the hands of the London bankers. I at once resolved to ratify the agreement, and immediately sent the necessary documents to Miss Lind and Messrs. Benedict and Belletti.

I then began to prepare the public mind, through the newspapers, for the reception of the great songstress. How effectually this was done, is still within the remembrance of the American public. As a sample of the manner in which I accomplished my purpose, I present the following extract from my first letter, which appeared in the New York papers of February 22, 1850:

"Perhaps I may not make any money by this enterprise; but I assure you that if I knew I should not make a farthing profit, I would ratify the engagement, so anxious am I that the United

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States should be visited by a lady whose vocal powers have never been approached by any other human being, and whose character is charity, simplicity, and goodness personified.

"Miss Lind has numerous better offers than the one she has accepted from me; but she has great anxiety to visit America. She speaks of this country and its institutions in the highest terms of praise, and as money is by no means the greatest inducement that can be laid before her, she is determined to visit us. In her engagement with me (which includes Havana), she expressly reserves the right to give charitable concerts whenever she thinks proper.

"Since her *début* in England, she has given to the poor from her own private purse more than the whole amount which I have engaged to pay her, and the proceeds of concerts for charitable purposes in Great Britain, where she has sung gratuitously, have realized more than ten times that amount."

The people soon began to talk about Jenny Lind, and I was particularly anxious to obtain a good portrait of her. Fortunately, a fine opportunity occurred. One day, while I was sitting in the office of the Museum, a foreigner approached me with a small package under his arm. He informed me in broken English that he was a Swede, and said he was an artist who had just arrived from Stockholm, where Jenny Lind had kindly given him a number of sittings, and he now had with him the portrait of her which he had painted upon copper. He unwrapped the package, and showed me a beautiful picture of the Swedish Nightingale, inclosed in an elegant gilt frame, about fourteen by twenty inches. It was just the thing I wanted; the price was fifty dollars, and I purchased it at once. Upon showing it to an artist friend the same day, he quietly assured me that it was a cheap lithograph pasted on a tin back, neatly varnished, and made to appear like a fine oil painting. The intrinsic value of the picture did not exceed thirty-seven and one half cents!

After getting together all my available funds for the pur-

WALL STREET WISDOM

pose of transmitting them to London in the shape of United States bonds, I found a considerable sum still lacking to make up the amount. I had some second mortgages which were perfectly good, but I could not negotiate them in Wall street. Nothing would answer there short of first mortgages on New York or Brooklyn city property.

I went to the president of the bank where I had done all my business for eight years. I offered him, as security for a loan, my second mortgages, and as an additional inducement, I proposed to make over to him my contract with Jenny Lind, with a written guaranty that he should appoint a receiver, who, at my expense, should take charge of all the receipts over and above three thousand dollars per night, and appropriate them towards the payment of my loan. He laughed in my face, and said: "Mr. Barnum, it is generally believed in Wall street, that your engagement with Jenny Lind will ruin you. I do not think you will ever receive so much as three thousand dollars at a single concert." I was indignant at his want of appreciation, and answered him that I would not at that moment take \$150,000 for my contract; nor would I. I found, upon further inquiry, that it was useless in Wall street to offer the "Nightingale" in exchange for goldfinches. I finally was introduced to Mr. John L. Aspinwall, of the firm of Messrs. Howland & Aspinwall, and he gave me a letter of credit from his firm on Baring Brothers, for a large sum on collateral securities, which a spirit of genuine respect for my enterprise induced him to accept.

After disposing of several pieces of property for cash, I footed up the various amounts, and still discovered myself five thousand dollars short. I felt that it was indeed "the last feather [*sic* — Ed.] that breaks the camel's back." Happening casually to state my desperate case to the Rev. Abel C. Thomas, of Philadelphia, for many years a friend of mine, he promptly placed the requisite amount at my disposal. I gladly accepted his proffered friendship, and felt that he had removed a mountain-weight from my shoulders.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NIGHTINGALE IN NEW YORK

Final Concerts in Liverpool — Departure for America — Arrival off Staten Island — My First Interview with Jenny Lind — The Tremendous Throng at the Wharf — Triumphal Arches — "Welcome to America" — Excitement in the City — Serenade at the Irving House — The Prize Ode — Bayard Taylor the Prizeman — "Barnum's Parnassus" — "Barnumopsis" — First Concert in Castle Garden — A New Agreement — Reception of Jenny Lind — Unbounded Enthusiasm — Barnum Called Out — Julius Benedict — The Success of the Enterprise Established — Two Grand Charity Concerts in New York — Date of the First Regular Concert.

AFTER the engagement with Miss Lind was consummated, she declined several liberal offers to sing in London, but, at my solicitation, gave two concerts in Liverpool, on the eve of her departure for America. My object in making this request was, to add the *éclat* of that side to the excitement on this side of the Atlantic, which was already nearly up to fever heat.

The first of the two Liverpool concerts was given the night previous to the departure of the Saturday steamer for America. My agent had procured the services of a musical critic from London, who finished his account of this concert at half past one o'clock the following morning, and at two o'clock my agent was overseeing its insertion in a Liverpool morning paper, numbers of which he forwarded to me by the steamer of the same day. The republication of the criticism in the American papers, including an account of the enthusiasm which attended and followed this concert — her trans-Atlantic —, had the desired effect.

On Wednesday morning, August 21, 1850, Jenny Lind and Messrs. Benedict and Belletti, set sail from Liverpool in the steamship "Atlantic," in which I had long before engaged

THE MEETING

the necessary accommodations, and on board of which I had shipped a piano for their use. They were accompanied by my agent, Mr. Wilton, and also by Miss Ahmansen¹ and Mr. Max Hjortzberg, cousins of Miss Lind, the latter being her Secretary; also by her two servants, and the valet of Messrs. Benedict and Belletti.

It was expected that the steamer would arrive on Sunday, September 1, but, determined to meet the songstress on her arrival, whenever it might be, I went to Staten Island on Saturday, and slept at the hospitable residence of my friend, Dr. A. Sidney Doane, who was at that time the Health Officer of the Port of New York. A few minutes before twelve o'clock, on Sunday morning, the "Atlantic" hove in sight, and immediately afterwards, through the kindness of my friend Doane, I was on board the ship, and had taken Jenny Lind by the hand.

After a few moments' conversation, she asked me when and where I had heard her sing.

"I never had the pleasure of seeing you before in my life," I replied.

"How is it possible that you dared risk so much money on a person whom you never heard sing?" she asked in surprise.

"I risked it on your reputation, which in musical matters I would much rather trust than my own judgment," I replied.

I may as well state, that although I relied prominently upon Jenny Lind's reputation as a great musical *artiste*, I also took largely into my estimate of her success with all classes of the American public, her character for extraordinary benevolence and generosity. Without this peculiarity in her disposition, I never would have dared make the engagement which I did, as I felt sure that there were multitudes of individuals in America who would be prompted to attend her concerts by this feeling alone.

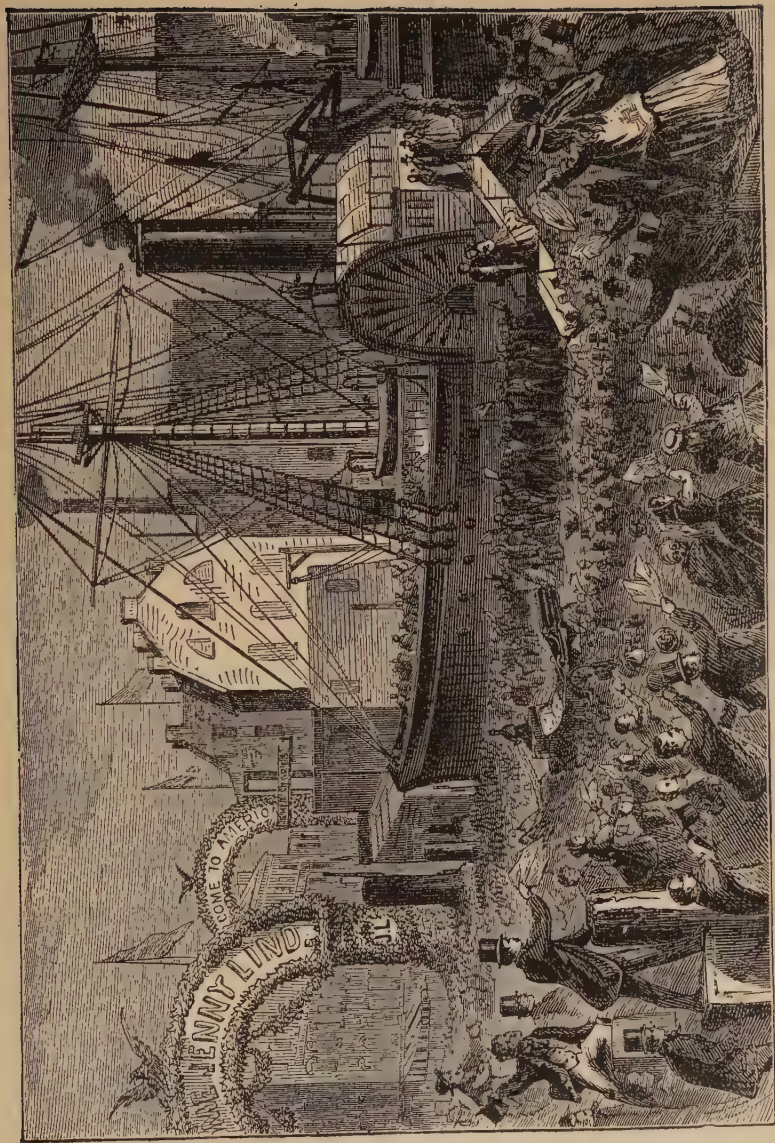
Thousands of persons covered the shipping and piers, and other thousands had congregated on the wharf at Canal street,

¹ Josephine Ahmansson. [Ed.]

to see her. The wildest enthusiasm prevailed as the steamer approached the dock. So great was the rush on a sloop near the steamer's berth, that one man, in his zeal to obtain a good view, accidentally tumbled overboard, amid the shouts of those near him. Miss Lind witnessed this incident, and was much alarmed. He was, however, soon rescued, after taking to himself a cold duck instead of securing a view of the Nightingale. A bower of green trees, decorated with beautiful flags, was discovered on the wharf, together with two triumphal arches, on one of which was inscribed, "Welcome, Jenny Lind!" The second was surmounted by the American eagle, and bore the inscription, "Welcome to America!" These decorations were not produced by magic, and I do not know that I can reasonably find fault with those who suspected I had a hand in their erection. My private carriage was in waiting, and Jenny Lind was escorted to it by Captain West. The rest of the musical party entered the carriage, and mounting the box at the driver's side, I directed him to the Irving House.² I took that seat as a legitimate advertisement, and my presence on the outside of the carriage aided those who filled the windows and sidewalks along the whole route, in coming to the conclusion that Jenny Lind had arrived.

A reference to the journals of that day will show, that never before had there been such enthusiasm in the City of New York, or indeed in America. Within ten minutes after our arrival at the Irving House, not less than twenty thousand persons had congregated around the entrance in Broadway, nor was the number diminished before nine o'clock in the evening. At her request, I dined with her that afternoon, and when, according to European custom, she prepared to pledge me in a glass of wine, she was somewhat surprised at my saying, "Miss Lind, I do not think you can ask any other favor on earth which I would not gladly grant; but I am a teetotaler, and must beg to be permitted to drink your health and happiness in a glass of cold water."

² At Broadway and Chambers street. [Ed.]



THE NIGHTINGALE LANDS IN NEW YORK

Scene at the Canal-Street Wharf As Jenny Lind, Escorted by P. T. B., Came Ashore from the "Atlantic." (From the 1869 "Struggles and Triumphs.")

THE JENNY LIND MANIA

At twelve o'clock that night, she was serenaded by the New York Musical Fund Society, numbering, on that occasion, two hundred musicians. They were escorted to the Irving House by about three hundred firemen, in their red shirts, bearing torches. There was a far greater throng in the streets than there was even during the day. The calls for Jenny Lind were so vehement that I led her through a window to the balcony. The loud cheers from the crowds lasted for several minutes, before the serenade was permitted to proceed again.

I have given the merest sketch of but a portion of the incidents of Jenny Lind's first day in America. For weeks afterwards the excitement was unabated. Her rooms were thronged by visitors, including the magnates of the land in both Church and State. The carriages of the wealthiest citizens could be seen in front of her hotel at nearly all hours of the day, and it was with some difficulty that I prevented the "fashionables" from monopolizing her altogether, and thus, as I believed, sadly marring my interests by cutting her off from the warm sympathies she had awakened among the masses. Presents of all sorts were showered upon her. Milliners, mantua-makers, and shopkeepers vied with each other in calling her attention to their wares, of which they sent her many valuable specimens, delighted if, in return, they could receive her autograph acknowledgment. Songs, quadrilles, and polkas were dedicated to her, and poets sung in her praise. We had Jenny Lind gloves, Jenny Lind bonnets, Jenny Lind riding hats, Jenny Lind shawls, mantillas, robes, chairs, sofas, pianos — in fact every thing was Jenny Lind. Her movements were constantly watched, and the moment her carriage appeared at the door, it was surrounded by multitudes, eager to catch a glimpse of the Swedish Nightingale.

In looking over my "scrap-books" of extracts from the New York papers of that day, in which all accessible details concerning her were duly chronicled, it seems almost incredible that such a degree of enthusiasm should have existed. An abstract of the "sayings and doings" in regard to the Jenny Lind mania

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

for the first ten days after her arrival, appeared in the London "Times" of September 23, 1850, and although it was an ironical "showing up" of the American enthusiasm, filling several columns, it was nevertheless a faithful condensation of facts which at this late day seem even to myself more like a dream than reality.

Before her arrival I had offered \$200 for a prize ode, "Greeting to America," to be sung by Jenny Lind at her first concert. Several hundred "poems" were sent in from all parts of the United States and the Canadas. The duties of the Prize Committee, in reading these effusions and making choice of the one most worthy the prize, were truly arduous. The "offerings," with perhaps a dozen exceptions, were the merest doggerel trash. The prize was awarded to Bayard Taylor for the following ode:

GREETING TO AMERICA

WORDS BY BAYARD TAYLOR — MUSIC BY JULIUS BENEDICT

I GREET with a full heart the Land of the West,
Whose Banner of Stars o'er a world is unrolled;
Whose empire o'ershadows Atlantic's wide breast,
And opens to sunset its gateway of gold!
The land of the mountain, the land of the lake,
And rivers that roll in magnificent tide —
Where the souls of the mighty from slumber awake,
And hallow the soil for whose freedom they died!

Thou Cradle of Empire! though wide be the foam
That severs the land of my fathers and thee,
I hear, from thy bosom, the welcome of home,
For Song has a home in the hearts of the Free!
And long as thy waters shall gleam in the sun,
And long as thy heroes remember their scars,
Be the hands of thy children united as one,
And Peace shed her light on thy Banner of Stars!

This award, although it gave general satisfaction, yet was met with disfavor by several disappointed poets, who, notwithstanding the decision of the committee, persisted in believ-

FROM THE "PARNASSUS"

ing and declaring their own productions to be the best.³ This state of feeling was doubtless, in part, the cause which led to the publication, about this time, of a witty pamphlet entitled "Barnum's Parnassus; being Confidential Disclosures of the Prize Committee on the Jenny Lind Song."⁴

It gave some capital hits in which the committee, the enthusiastic public, the Nightingale, and myself, were roundly ridiculed. The following is a fair specimen from the work in question:

BARNUMOPSIS

A RECITATIVE

WHEN to the common rest that crowns his days,
Dusty and worn the tired pedestrian goes,
What light is that whose wide o'erlooking blaze
A sudden glory on his pathway throws?

'Tis not the setting sun, whose drooping lid
Closed on the weary world at half-past six;
'Tis not the rising moon, whose rays are hid
Behind the city's sombre piles of bricks.

It is the Drummond Light, that from the top
Of Barnum's massive pile, sky-mingling there,
Darts its quick gleam o'er every shadowed shop,
And gilds Broadway with unaccustomed glare.

There o'er the sordid gloom, whose deep'ning tracks
Furrow the city's brow, the front of ages,
Thy loftier light descends on cabs and hacks,
And on two dozen different lines of stages!

O twilight Sun, with thy far-darting ray,
Thou art a type of him whose tireless hands
Hung thee on high to guide the stranger's way,
Where, in its pride, his vast Museum stands.

³ C. G. Rosenberg says, in his "Jenny Lind in America" (1851), that Taylor's three stanzas were "cut down to two, in order to give Jenny the opportunity of acquiring them in the brief space which she could give to this task." He adds that for these two, Benedict, "in the brief space of time which was given him to write the music," did "all that a composer could do." [Ed.]

⁴ This was by William Allen Butler (1825-1902), lawyer and poet, later known for his "Nothing to Wear," satirizing Flora McFlimsey of Madison Square. [Ed.]

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Him, who in search of wonders new and strange,
Grasps the wide skirts of Nature's mystic robe,
Explores the circles of eternal change,
And the dark chambers of the central globe.

He, from the reedy shores of fabled Nile,
Has brought, thick-ribbed and ancient as old iron,
That venerable beast the crocodile,
And many a skin of many a famous lion.

Go lose thyself in those continuous halls,
Where strays the fond papa with son and daughter,
And all that charms or startles or appals,
Thou shalt behold, and for a single quarter!

Far from the Barcan deserts now withdrawn,
There huge constrictors coil their scaly backs;
There, cased in glass, malignant and unshorn,
Old murderers glare in sullenness and wax.

There many a varied form the sight beguiles,
In rusty broadcloth decked and shocking hat,
And there the unwieldy Lambert sits and smiles,
In the majestic plenitude of fat.⁵

Or for thy gayer hours, the orang-outang
Or ape salutes thee with his strange grimace,
And in their shapes, stuffed as on earth they sprang,
Thine individual being thou canst trace!

And joys the youth in life's green spring, who goes
With the sweet babe and the gray-headed nurse,
To see those Cosmoramaic orbs disclose
The varied beauties of the universe.

And last, not least, the marvellous Ethiope,
Changing his skin by preternatural skill,
Whom every setting sun's diurnal slope
Leaves whiter than the last, and whitening still.

All that of monstrous, scaly, strange, and queer,
Has come from out the womb of earliest time,
Thou hast, O Barnum, in thy keeping here,
Nor is this all — for triumphs more sublime

Await thee yet! I, Jenny Lind, who reigned
Sublimely throned, the imperial queen of song,
Wooed by thy golden harmonies, have deigned
Captive to join the heterogeneous throng.

⁵ Daniel Lambert, English fat man, who, though but 5 ft. 11 in. in height, weighed at his death (1809) 739 pounds. [Ed.]

GENIN, THE HATTER

Sustained by an unfaltering trust in coin,
Dealt from thy hand, O thou illustrious man,
Gladly I heard the summons come to join
Myself the innumerable caravan.

Besides the foregoing, this pamphlet contained eleven poems, most of which abounded in wit. I have room for but a single stanza. The poet speaks of the various curiosities in the Museum, and representing me as still searching for further novelties, makes me address the Swedish Nightingale as follows:

"So Jenny, come along! you're just the card for me,
And quit these kings and queens, for the country of the free;
They'll welcome you with speeches, and serenades, and rockets,
And you will touch their hearts, and I will tap their pockets;
And if between us both the public isn't skinned,
Why, my name isn't Barnum, nor your name Jenny Lind!"

Various extracts from this brochure were copied in the papers daily, and my agents scattered the work as widely as possible, thus efficiently aiding and advertising my enterprise and serving to keep up the public excitement.

.
. .

Jenny Lind's first concert was fixed to come off at Castle Garden, on Wednesday evening, September 11th, and most of the tickets were sold at auction on the Saturday and Monday previous to the concert. John N. Genin, the hatter, laid the foundation of his fortune by purchasing the first ticket at \$225. It has been extensively reported that Mr. Genin and I are brothers-in-law, but our only relations are those of business and friendship.⁶ The proprietors of the Garden saw fit to make the usual charge of one shilling to all persons who entered the premises, yet three thousand people were present at the auc-

⁶ "As an advertisement, it [the purchase of the ticket] answered Genin's purpose admirably. His name was published in every paper in the Union." — Rosenberg: "Jenny Lind in America," p. 16. [Ed.]

tion. One thousand tickets were sold on the first day for an aggregate sum of \$10,141.

On the Tuesday after her arrival I informed Miss Lind that I wished to make a slight alteration in our agreement. "What is it?" she asked in surprise.

"I am convinced," I replied, "that our enterprise will be much more successful than either of us anticipated. I wish, therefore, to stipulate that you shall receive not only \$1,000 for each concert, besides all the expenses, as heretofore agreed on, but after taking \$5,500 per night for expenses and my services, the balance shall be equally divided between us."

Jenny looked at me with astonishment. She could not comprehend my proposition. After I had repeated it, and she fully understood its import, she cordially grasped me by the hand, and exclaimed, "Mr. Barnum, you are a gentleman of honor: you are generous; it is just as Mr. Bates told me; I will sing for you as long as you please; I will sing for you in America — in Europe — anywhere!"⁷

Upon drawing the new contract which was to include this entirely voluntary and liberal advance on my part, beyond the terms of the original agreement, Miss Lind's lawyer, Mr. John Jay, who was present solely to put in writing the new arrangement between Miss Lind and myself, insisted upon intruding the suggestion that she should have the right to terminate the engagement at the end of the sixtieth concert, if she should choose to do so. This proposition was so persistently and annoyingly pressed that Miss Lind was finally induced to entertain it, at the same time offering, if she did so, to refund to me all moneys paid her up to that time, excepting the \$1,000 per concert according to the original agreement. This was agreed

⁷ "Let it not be supposed that the increase of her compensation was wholly an act of generosity on my part. I had become convinced that there was money enough in the enterprise for all of us, and I also felt that although she should have been satisfied by my complying with the terms of the agreement, yet envious persons would doubtless endeavor to create discontent in her mind, and it would be a stroke of policy to prevent the possibility of such an occurrence." — Barnum, in the 1855 "Life." [Ed.]

BLANK AFFIDAVITS

to, and it was also arranged that she might terminate the engagement at the one-hundredth concert, if she desired, upon paying me \$25,000 for the loss of the additional fifty nights.

After this new arrangement was completed, I said: "Now, Miss Lind, as you are directly interested, you must have an agent to assist in taking and counting the tickets"; to which she replied, "Oh, no! Mr. Barnum; I have every confidence in you and I must decline to act upon your suggestion"; but I continued:

"I never allow myself, if it can be avoided, when I have associates in the same interests, to be placed in a position where I must assume the sole responsibility. I never even permitted an actor to take a benefit at my Museum, unless he placed a ticket-taker of his own at the door."

Thus urged, Miss Lind engaged Mr. Seton to act as her ticket-taker, and after we had satisfactorily arranged the matter, Jay, knowing the whole affair, had the impudence to come to me with a package of blank printed affidavits, which he demanded that I should fill out, from day to day, with the receipts of each concert, and swear to their correctness before a magistrate!

I told him that I would see him on the subject at Miss Lind's hotel that afternoon, and going there a few moments before the appointed hour, I narrated the circumstances to Mr. Benedict and showed him an affidavit which I had made that morning to the effect that I would never directly or indirectly take any advantage whatever of Miss Lind. This I had made oath to, for I thought if there was any swearing of that kind to be done I would do it "in a lump" rather than in detail. Mr. Benedict was very much opposed to it, and arriving during the interview, Jay was made to see the matter in such a light that he was thoroughly ashamed of his proposition, and, requesting that the affair might not be mentioned to Miss Lind, he begged me to destroy the affidavit. I heard no more about swearing to our receipts.

On Tuesday, September 10th, I informed Miss Lind that,

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judging by present appearances, her portion of the proceeds of the first concert would amount to \$10,000. She immediately resolved to devote every dollar of it to charity; and, sending for Mayor Woodhull, she acted under his and my advice in selecting the various institutions among which she wished the amount to be distributed.

My arrangements of the concert room were very complete. The great *parterre* and gallery of Castle Garden were divided by imaginary lines into four compartments, each of which was designated by a lamp of a different color. The tickets were printed in colors corresponding with the location which the holders were to occupy, and one hundred ushers, with rosettes and bearing wands tipped with ribbons of the several hues, enabled every individual to find his or her seat without the slightest difficulty. Every seat was of course numbered in color to correspond with the check, which each person retained after giving up an entrance ticket at the door. Thus, tickets, checks, lamps, rosettes, wands, and even the seat numbers were all in the appropriate colors to designate the different departments. These arrangements were duly advertised, and every particular was also printed upon each ticket. In order to prevent confusion, the doors were opened at five o'clock,⁸ while the concert did not commence until eight. The consequence was, that although about five thousand persons were present at the first concert, their entrance was marked with as much order and quiet as was ever witnessed in the assembling of a congregation at church. These precautions were observed at all the concerts given throughout the country under my administration, and the good order which always prevailed was the subject of numberless encomiums from the public and the press.

The reception of Jenny Lind on her first appearance, in point of enthusiasm, was probably never before equalled in the world. As Mr. Benedict led her towards the footlights, the entire audience rose to their feet and welcomed her with three cheers, accompanied by the waving of thousands of hats and

⁸ The programme, as given by Rosenberg, says "six o'clock." [Ed.]



Courtesy of Brown Brothers.

Jenny Lind

From a photographic enlargement of a daguerreotype in the collection of
T. T. Hawes.

COMPLETE TRIUMPH

handkerchiefs. This was by far the largest audience to which Jenny Lind had ever sung. She was evidently much agitated, but the orchestra commenced, and before she had sung a dozen notes of "Casta Diva,"⁹ she began to recover her self-possession, and long before the *scena* was concluded, she was as calm as if she was in her own drawing-room. Towards the last portion of the *cavatina*, the audience was so completely carried away by their feelings, that the remainder of the air was drowned in a perfect tempest of acclamation. Enthusiasm had been wrought to its highest pitch, but the musical powers of Jenny Lind exceeded all the brilliant anticipations, which had been formed, and her triumph was complete. At the conclusion of the concert Jenny Lind was loudly called for, and was obliged to appear three times before the audience could be satisfied. They then called vociferously for "Barnum," and I reluctantly responded to their demand.

On this first night, Mr. Julius Benedict firmly established with the American people his European reputation, as a most accomplished conductor and musical composer; while Signor Belletti inspired an admiration which grew warmer and deeper in the minds of the American people, to the end of his career in this country.

It would seem as if the Jenny Lind mania had reached its culminating point before she appeared, and I confess that I feared the anticipations of the public were too high to be realized, and hence that there would be a reaction after the first concert; but I was happily disappointed. The transcendent musical genius of the Swedish Nightingale was superior to all that fancy could paint, and the furor did not attain its highest point until she had been heard. The people were in ecstasies; the powers of editorial acumen, types, and ink, were inadequate to sound her praises. The Rubicon was passed. The

⁹ From Bellini's "Norma." This, Jenny Lind's first number, had been preceded by the "Oberon" overture and by an aria for Signor Belletti from Rosini's "Maometto Secondo." The complete programme may be found in Rosenberg's "Jenny Lind in America," p. 22. [Ed.]

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successful issue of the Jenny Lind enterprise was established. I think there were a hundred men in New York, the day after her first concert, who would have willingly paid me \$200,000 for my contract. I received repeated offers for an eighth, a tenth, or a sixteenth, equivalent to that price. But mine had been the risk, and I was determined mine should be the triumph. So elated was I with my success, in spite of all obstacles and false prophets, that I do not think half a million of dollars would have tempted me to relinquish the enterprise.

Upon settling the receipts of the first concert, they were found to be somewhat less than I anticipated. The sums bid at the auction sales, together with the tickets purchased at private sale, amounted to more than \$20,000. It proved, however, that several of the tickets bid off at from \$12 to \$25 each, were not called for. In some instances, probably the zeal of the bidders cooled down when they came out from the scene of excitement, and once more breathed the fresh sea-breeze which came sweeping up from the Narrows, while perhaps, in other instances, bids were made by parties who never intended to take the tickets. I can only say, once for all, that I was never privy to a false bid, and was so particular upon that point, that I would not permit one of my employees to bid on, or purchase a ticket at auction, though requested to do so for especial friends.

The amount of money received for tickets to the first concert was \$17,864.05. As this made Miss Lind's portion too small to realize the \$10,000 which had been announced as devoted to charity, I proposed to divide equally with her the proceeds of the first two concerts, and not count them at all in our regular engagement. Accordingly, the second concert was given September 13th, and the receipts, amounting to \$14,203.03, were, like those of the first concert, equally divided. Our third concert, but which, as between ourselves, we called the first regular concert, was given Tuesday, September 17, 1850.

CHAPTER XIX

SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT

Head-Work and Hand-Work — Managing Public Opinion — Creating a Furor — The "New York Herald" — Jenny Lind's Evil Adviser — John Jay — Miss Lind's Charities — A Poor Girl in Boston — The Nightingale at Iranistan — Rumor of Her Marriage to P. T. Barnum — The Story Based on Our "Engagement" — What Iranistan Did for Me — Avoiding Crowds — In Philadelphia and Baltimore — A substitute for Miss Lind — Our Orchestra — President Fillmore, Clay, Foote, Benton, Scott, Cass, and Webster — Visit to Mt. Vernon — Christmas Presents — New Year's Eve — We Go to Havana — Playing Ball — Fredrika Bremer — A Happy Month in Cuba.

No one can imagine the amount of head-work and hand-work which I performed during the first four weeks after Jenny Lind's arrival. Anticipating much of this, I had spent some time in August at the White Mountains to recruit my energies. Of course I had not been idle during the summer. I had put innumerable means and appliances into operation for the furtherance of my object, and little did the public see of the hand that indirectly pulled at their heart-strings, preparatory to a relaxation of their purse-strings; and these means and appliances were continued and enlarged throughout the whole of that triumphal musical campaign.

The first great assembly at Castle Garden was not gathered by Jenny Lind's musical genius and powers alone. She was effectually introduced to the public before they had seen or heard her. She appeared in the presence of a jury already excited to enthusiasm in her behalf. She more than met their expectations, and all the means I had adopted to prepare the way were thus abundantly justified.

As a manager, I worked by setting others to work. Biographies of the Swedish Nightingale were largely circulated;

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"Foreign Correspondence" glorified her talents and triumphs by narratives of her benevolence; and "printer's ink" was invoked in every possible form, to put and keep Jenny Lind before the people. I am happy to say that the press generally echoed the voice of her praise from first to last. I could fill many volumes with printed extracts which are nearly all of a similar tenor to the following unbought, unsolicited editorial article, which appeared in the "New York Herald" of September 10, 1850 (the day before the first concert given by Miss Lind in the United States):

JENNY LIND AND THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. — What ancient monarch was he, either in history or in fable, who offered half his kingdom (the price of box tickets and choice seats in those days) for the invention of an original sensation, or the discovery of a fresh pleasure? That sensation — that pleasure which royal power in the old world failed to discover — has been called into existence at a less price, by Mr. Barnum, a plain republican, and is now about to be enjoyed by the sovereigns of the new world.

Jenny Lind, the most remarkable phenomenon in musical art which has for the last century flashed across the horizon of the old world, is now among us, and will make her *début* to-morrow night to a house of nearly ten thousand listeners, yielding in proceeds by auction a sum of forty or fifty thousand dollars. For the last ten days our musical reporters have furnished our readers with every matter connected with her arrival in this metropolis, and the steps adopted by Mr. Barnum in preparation for her first appearance. The proceedings of yesterday, consisting of the sale of the remainder of the tickets, and the astonishing, the wonderful sensation produced at her first rehearsal on the few persons, critics in musical art, who were admitted on the occasion, will be found elsewhere in our columns.

We concur in everything that has been said by our musical reporter, describing her extraordinary genius — her unrivalled combination of power and art. Nothing has been exaggerated, not an iota. Three years ago, more or less, we heard Jenny Lind on many occasions when she made the first great sensation in Europe by her *début* at the London

“A PRODIGY IN SONG”

Opera House. Then she was great in power — in art — in genius; now she is greater in all. We speak from experience and conviction. Then she astonished, and pleased, and fascinated the thousands of the British aristocracy; now she will fascinate, and please, and delight, and almost make mad with musical excitement, the millions of the American democracy. Tomorrow night, this new sensation — this fresh movement — this excitement excelling all former excitements — will be called into existence, when she pours out the notes of *Casta Diva*, and exhibits her astonishing powers — her wonderful peculiarities, that seem more of heaven than of earth — more of a voice from eternity, than from the lips of a human being.

We speak soberly — seriously — calmly. The public expectation has run very high for the last week — higher than at any former period of our past musical annals. But high as it has risen, the reality — the fact — the concert — the voice and power of Jenny Lind — will far surpass all past expectation. Jenny Lind is a wonder, and a prodigy in song — and no mistake.

As usual, however, the “Herald” very soon “took it all back” and roundly abused Miss Lind and persistently attacked her manager. As usual, too, the public paid no attention to the “Herald” and doubled their patronage of the Jenny Lind concerts.

After the first month the business became thoroughly systematized, and by the help of such agents as my faithful treasurer, L. C. Stewart, and the indefatigable Le Grand Smith, my personal labors were materially relieved; but from the first concert on the 11th of September, 1850, until the ninety-third concert on the 9th of June, 1851, a space of nine months, I did not know a waking moment that was entirely free from anxiety.

I could not hope to be exempted from trouble and perplexity in managing an enterprise which depended altogether on popular favor, and which involved great consequences to myself; but I did not expect the numerous petty annoyances which beset me, especially in the early period of the concerts. Miss Lind did

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not dream, nor did any one else, of the unparalleled enthusiasm that would greet her; and the first immense assembly at Castle Garden somewhat prepared her, I suspect, to listen to evil advisers. It would seem that the terms of our revised contract were sufficiently liberal to her and sufficiently hazardous to myself, to justify the expectation of perfectly honorable treatment; but certain envious intermeddlers appeared to think differently. "Do you not see, Miss Lind, that Mr. Barnum is coining money out of your genius?" said they. Of course she saw it, but the high-minded Swede despised and spurned the advisers who recommended her to repudiate her contract with me at all hazards, and take the enterprise into her own hands — possibly to put it into theirs. I, however, suffered much from the unreasonable interference of her lawyer, Mr. John Jay. Benedict and Belletti behaved like men, and Jenny afterwards expressed to me her regret that she had for a moment listened to the vexatious exactions of her legal counsellor.

To show the difficulties with which I had to contend thus early in my enterprise, I copy a letter which I wrote, a little more than one month after Miss Lind commenced her engagement with me, to my friend Mr. Joshua Bates, of Messrs. Baring Brothers & Co., London:

NEW YORK, Oct. 23, 1850.

JOSHUA BATES, ESQ.:

Dear Sir, — I take the liberty to write you a few lines, merely to say that we are getting along as well as could reasonably be expected. In this country you are aware that the rapid accumulation of wealth always creates much envy, and envy soon augments to malice. Such are the elements at work to a limited degree against myself, and although Miss Lind, Benedict, and myself have never, as yet, had the slightest feelings between us, to my knowledge, except those of friendship, yet I cannot well see how this can long continue in face of the fact that, nearly every day, they allow persons (some moving in the first classes of society) to approach them, and spend hours in traducing me; even her attorney, Mr. John Jay, has been so blind to her interests, as to aid in

“ THE FACTS IN THE CASE ”

poisoning her mind against me, by pouring into her ears the most silly twaddle, all of which amounts to nothing and less than nothing — such as the regret that I was a “showman,” exhibitor of Tom Thumb, etc., etc.

Without the elements which I possess for business, as well as my knowledge of human nature, acquired in catering for the public, the result of her concerts here would not have been pecuniarily one half as much as at present — and such men as the Hon. Edward Everett, G. G. Howland, and others will tell you that there is no charlatanism or lack of dignity in my management of these concerts. I know as well as any person that the merits of Jenny Lind are the best capital to depend upon to secure public favor, and I have thus far acted on this knowledge. Everything which money and attention can procure for their comfort, they have, and I am glad to know that they are satisfied on this score. All I fear is, that these continual backbitings, if listened to by her, will, by and by, produce a feeling of distrust or regret, which will lead to unpleasant results.

The fact is, her mind ought to be as free as air, and she herself as free as a bird, and, being satisfied of my probity and ability, she should turn a deaf ear to all envious and malevolent attacks on me. I have hoped that by thus briefly stating to you the facts in the case, you might be induced for her interests as well as mine to drop a line of advice to Mr. Benedict and another to Mr. Jay on this subject. If I am asking or expecting too much, I pray you not to give it a thought, for I feel myself fully able to carry through my rights alone, although I should deplore nothing so much as to be obliged to do so in a feeling of unfriendliness. I have risked much money on the issue of this speculation — it has proved successful. I am full of perplexity and anxiety, and labor continually for success, and I cannot allow ignorance or envy to rob me of the fruits of my enterprise.

Sincerely and gratefully, yours,

P. T. BARNUM.

It is not my purpose to enter into full details of all of the Lind concerts, though I have given elsewhere a transcript from the account books of my treasurer, presenting a table of

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

the place and exact receipts of each concert. This will gratify curiosity, and at the same time indicate our route of travel. Meanwhile, I devote a few pages to interesting incidents connected with Miss Lind's visit to America.

Jenny Lind's character for benevolence became so generally known, that her door was beset by persons asking charity, and she was in the receipt, while in the principal cities, of numerous letters, all on the same subject. Her secretary examined and responded favorably to some of them. He undertook at first to answer them all, but finally abandoned that course in despair. I knew of many instances in which she gave sums of money to applicants, varying in amount from \$20, \$50, \$500, to \$1,000, and in one instance she gave \$5,000 to a Swedish friend.

One night, while giving a concert in Boston, a girl approached the ticket-office, and laying down \$3 for a ticket, remarked, "There goes half a month's earnings, but I am determined to hear Jenny Lind." Miss Lind's secretary heard the remark, and a few minutes afterwards coming into her room, he laughingly related the circumstance. "Would you know the girl again?" asked Jenny, with an earnest look. Upon receiving an affirmative reply, she instantly placed a \$20 gold-piece in his hand, and said, "Poor girl! give her that with my best compliments." He at once found the girl, who cried with joy when she received the gold-piece, and heard the kind words with which the gift was accompanied.

The night after Jenny's arrival in Boston, a display of fireworks was given in her honor, in front of the Revere House, after which followed a beautiful torchlight procession by the Germans of that city.

On her return from Boston to New York, Jenny, her companion, and Messrs. Benedict and Belletti, stopped at Iranistan, my residence in Bridgeport, where they remained until the following day. The morning after her arrival, she took my arm and proposed a promenade through the grounds. She seemed much pleased, and said, "I am astonished that you should have

“ *A BEAUTIFUL ENGRAVING* ”

left such a beautiful place for the sake of travelling through the country with me.”

The same day she told me in a playful mood, that she had heard a most extraordinary report. “ I have heard that you and I are about to be married,” said she. “ Now, how could such an absurd report ever have originated? ”

“ Probably from the fact that we are ‘ engaged,’ ” I replied. She enjoyed a joke, and laughed heartily.

“ Do you know, Mr. Barnum,” said she, “ that if you had not built Iranistan, I should never have come to America for you? ”

I expressed my surprise, and asked her to explain.

“ I had received several applications to visit the United States,” she continued, “ but I did not much like the appearance of the applicants, nor did I relish the idea of crossing 3,000 miles of ocean; so I declined them all. But the first letter which Mr. Wilton, your agent, addressed me, was written upon a sheet headed with a beautiful engraving of Iranistan. It attracted my attention. I said to myself, a gentleman who has been so successful in his business as to be able to build and reside in such a palace cannot be a mere ‘ adventurer.’ So I wrote to your agent, and consented to an interview, which I should have declined, if I had not seen the picture of Iranistan! ”

“ That, then, fully pays me for building it,” I replied; “ for I intend and expect to make more by this musical enterprise than Iranistan cost me.”

“ I really hope so,” she replied; “ but you must not be too sanguine, you know, ‘ man proposes but God disposes.’ ”

Jenny Lind always desired to reach a place in which she was to sing, without having the time of her arrival known, thus avoiding the excitement of promiscuous crowds. As a manager, however, I knew that the interests of the enterprise depended in a great degree upon these excitements. Although it frequently seemed inconceivable to her how so many thousands should have discovered her secret and consequently gathered together to receive her, I was not so much astonished,

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inasmuch as my agent always had early telegraphic intelligence of the time of her anticipated arrival, and was not slow in communicating the information to the public.

On reaching Philadelphia, a large concourse of persons awaited the approach of the steamer which conveyed her. With difficulty we pressed through the crowd, and were followed by many thousands to Jones's Hotel. The street in front of the building was densely packed by the populace, and poor Jenny, who was suffering from a severe headache, retired to her apartments. I tried to induce the crowd to disperse, but they declared they would not do so until Jenny Lind should appear on the balcony. I would not disturb her, and knowing that the tumult might prove an annoyance to her, I placed her bonnet and shawl upon her companion, Miss Ahmansen, and led her out on the balcony. She bowed gracefully to the multitude, who gave her three hearty cheers and quietly dispersed. Miss Lind was so utterly averse to any thing like deception, that we never ventured to tell her the part which her bonnet and shawl had played in the absence of their owner.

Jenny was in the habit of attending church whenever she could do so without attracting notice. She always preserved her nationality, also, by inquiring out and attending Swedish churches wherever they could be found. She gave \$1,000 to a Swedish church in Chicago.

While in Boston, a poor Swedish girl, a domestic in a family at Roxbury, called on Jenny. She detained her visitor several hours, talking about home, and other matters, and in the evening took her in her carriage to the concert, gave her a seat, and sent her back to Roxbury in a carriage, at the close of the performances. I have no doubt the poor girl carried with her substantial evidences of her countrywoman's bounty.

My eldest daughter, Caroline, and her friend, Mrs. Lyman, of Bridgeport, accompanied me on the tour from New York to Havana, and thence home, *via* New Orleans and the Mississippi.

We were at Baltimore on the Sabbath, and my daughter,

THE PITH OF THE JOKE

accompanying a friend, who resided in the city, to church, took a seat with her in the choir, and joined in the singing. A number of the congregation, who had seen Caroline with me the day previous, and supposed her to be Jenny Lind, were yet laboring under the same mistake, and it was soon whispered through the church that Jenny Lind was in the choir! The excitement was worked to its highest pitch when my daughter rose as one of the musical group. Every ear was on the alert to catch the first notes of her voice, and when she sang, glances of satisfaction passed through the assembly. Caroline, quite unconscious of the attention she attracted, continued to sing to the end of the hymn. Not a note was lost upon the ears of the attentive congregation. "What an exquisite singer!" "Heavenly sounds!" "I never heard the like!" and similar expressions were whispered through the church.

At the conclusion of the services, my daughter and her friend found the passage way to their carriage blocked by a crowd who were anxious to obtain a nearer view of the "Swedish Nightingale," and many persons that afternoon boasted, in good faith, that they had listened to the extraordinary singing of the great songstress. The pith of the joke is that we have never discovered that my daughter has any extraordinary claims as a vocalist.

Our orchestra in New York consisted of sixty. When we started on our southern tour, we took with us permanently as the orchestra, twelve of the best musicians we could select, and in New Orleans augmented the force to sixteen. We increased the number to thirty-five, forty or fifty, as the case might be, by choice of musicians residing where the concerts were given. On our return to New York from Havana, we enlarged the orchestra to one hundred performers.

The morning after our arrival in Washington, President Fillmore called, and left his card, Jenny being out. When she returned and found the token of his attention, she was in something of a flurry. "Come," said she, "we must call on the President immediately."

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"Why so?" I inquired.

"Because he has called on me, and of course that is equivalent to a command for me to go to his house."

I assured her that she might make her mind at ease, for whatever might be the custom with crowned heads, our Presidents were not wont to "command" the movements of strangers, and that she would be quite in time if she returned his call the next day. She did so, and was charmed with the unaffected bearing of the President, and the warm kindnesses expressed by his amiable wife and daughter, and consented to spend the evening with them in conformity with their request. She was accompanied to the "White House" by Messrs. Benedict, Belletti, and myself, and several happy hours were spent in the private circle of the President's family.

Mr. Benedict, who engaged in a long quiet conversation with Mr. Fillmore, was highly pleased with the interview. A foreigner, accustomed to court etiquette, is generally surprised at the simplicity which characterizes the Chief Magistrate of this Union. In 1852 I called on the President with my friend the late Mr. Brettell, of London, who resided in St. James' Palace, and was quite a worshipper of the Queen, and an ardent admirer of all the dignities and ceremonies of royalty. He expected something of the kind in visiting the President of the United States, and was highly pleased with his disappointment.

Both concerts in Washington were attended by the President and his family, and every member of the Cabinet. I noticed, also, among the audience, Henry Clay, Benton, Foote, Cass, and General Scott, and nearly every member of Congress. On the following morning, Miss Lind was called upon by Mr. Webster, Mr. Clay, General Cass, and Colonel Benton, and all parties were evidently gratified. I had introduced Mr. Webster to her in Boston. Upon hearing one of her wild mountain songs in New York, and also in Washington, Mr. Webster signified his approval by rising, drawing himself up to his full height, and making a profound bow. Jenny was delighted by this expression of praise from the great statesman. When I

“ THAT IS A MAN ”

first introduced Miss Lind to Mr. Webster, at the Revere House, in Boston, she was greatly impressed with his manners and conversation, and after his departure, walked up and down the room in great excitement, exclaiming: “ Ah! Mr. Barnum, that is a man; I have never before seen such a man! ”¹

We visited the Capitol while both Houses were in session. Miss Lind took the arm of Hon. C. F. Cleveland, representative from Connecticut, and was by him escorted into various parts of the Capitol and the grounds, with all of which she was much pleased.

While I was in Washington an odd reminiscence of my old show-days in the South came back to me in a curious way. Some years before, in 1836, my travelling show company had stopped at a hotel in Jackson, Mississippi, and, as the house was crowded, soon after I went to bed five or six men came into the room with cards and a candle and asked permission, as there was no other place, to sit down and play a quiet game of “ brag.” I consented on condition that I might get up and participate, which was permitted and in a very little while, as I knew nothing whatever of the game, I lost fifty dollars. Good “ hands ” and good fortune soon enabled me to win back my

¹ According to Rosenberg (“ Jenny Lind in America ”), Webster first heard Jenny sing at one of the concerts given in Tripler Hall, New York, before she started on her southward trip. After the *fioratura* of operatic selections, Webster “ made a remark to one of his companions, which was by some means overheard and borne around to Mademoiselle Lind.” Rosenberg later heard that this remark was: “ Why does she not give us one of the simple mountain melodies of her native land? ” Soon the piano was moved forward and Jenny sang to her own accompaniment an air that Rosenberg believes was the “ Mountain Song,” known also as “ The Herdsman’s Song ” and “ The Echo Song,” in which the mountains give back the voice of a Swedish herder calling his cattle:

“ Kom kiyra, kom kiyra, kom kiyra,
Hoah! hoah! hoah! hoah! ”

At its end, Webster “ rose from his seat and bowed to her.”

Of Webster at Jenny’s first Washington appearance, Rosenberg says: “ At length she came to the ‘ Bird Song ’ [composed for her by Karl Taubert] and when she commenced this charming morsel of German melody, I saw his eyes brighten, and am tolerably certain that I detected him endeavoring to beat time with his foot.” [Ed.]

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money, at which point one of the players who had been introduced to me as "Lawyer Foote" said:

"Now the best thing you can do is to go back to bed; you don't know anything about the game, and these fellows do and they'll skin you."

I acted upon his advice. And now, years afterwards, when Senator Foote called upon Miss Lind the story came back to me, and while I was talking with him I remarked:

"Fifteen years ago, when I was in the South, I became acquainted with a lawyer named Foote, at Jackson, Mississippi."

"It must have been me," said the Senator, "I am the only 'Lawyer Foote, of Jackson, Mississippi.'"

"Oh! no, it could not have been you," and I told him the story.

"It was me," he whispered in my ear, and added, "I used to gamble like h——l in those days."

During the week I was invited with Miss Lind and her immediate friends, to visit Mount Vernon, with Colonel Washington, the then proprietor, and Mr. Seaton, ex-mayor of Washington, and editor of the "Intelligencer." Colonel Washington chartered a steamboat for the purpose. We were landed a short distance from the tomb, which we first visited. Proceeding to the house, we were introduced to Mrs. Washington, and several other ladies. Much interest was manifested by Miss Lind in examining the mementos of the great man whose home it had been. A beautiful collation was spread out and arranged in fine taste. Before leaving, Mrs. Washington presented Jenny with a book from the library, with the name of Washington written by his own hand. She was much overcome at receiving this present, called me aside, and expressed her desire to give something in return. "I have nothing with me," she said, "excepting this watch and chain, and I will give that if you think it will be acceptable." I knew the watch was very valuable, and told her that so costly a present would not be expected, nor would it be proper. "The expense is nothing, compared to the value of that book," she replied, with deep

SHAKING HANDS

emotion; "but as the watch was a present from a dear friend, perhaps I should not give it away." Jenny Lind, I am sure, never forgot the pleasurable emotions of that day.

At Richmond, half an hour previous to her departure, hundreds of young ladies and gentlemen had crowded into the halls of the house to secure a glimpse of her at parting. I informed her that she would find difficulty in passing out. "How long is it before we must start?" she asked. "Half an hour," I replied. "Oh, I will clear the passages before that time," said she, with a smile; whereupon she went into the upper hall, and informed the people that she wished to take the hands of every one of them, upon one condition, *viz.*: they should pass by her in rotation, and as fast as they had shaken hands, proceed down stairs, and not block up the passages. They joyfully consented to the arrangement, and in fifteen minutes the course was clear. Poor Jenny had shaken hands with every person in the crowd, and I presume she had a feeling remembrance of the incident for an hour or two at least. She was waited on by many members of the Legislature while in Richmond, that body being in session while we were there.

The voyage from Wilmington to Charleston was an exceedingly rough and perilous one. We were about thirty-six hours in making the passage, the usual time being seventeen. There was really great danger of our steamer being swamped, and we were all apprehensive that we should never reach the port of Charleston alive. Some of the passengers were in great terror. Jenny Lind exhibited more calmness upon this occasion than any other person, the crew excepted. We arrived safely at last, and I was grieved to learn that for twelve hours the loss of the steamer had been considered certain, and had even been announced by telegraph in the Northern cities.

We remained at Charleston about ten days, to take the steamer "Isabella" on her regular trip to Havana. Jenny had been through so much excitement at the North, that she determined to have quiet here, and therefore declined receiving any calls. This disappointed many ladies and gentlemen. One young

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lady, the daughter of a wealthy planter near Augusta, was so determined upon seeing her in private, that she paid one of the servants to allow her to put on a cap and white apron, and carry in the tray for Jenny's tea. I afterwards told Miss Lind of the joke, and suggested that after such an evidence of admiration, she should receive a call from the young lady.

"It is not admiration — it is only curiosity," replied Jenny, "and I will not encourage such folly."

Christmas was at hand, and Jenny Lind determined to honor it in the way she had often done in Sweden. She had a beautiful Christmas tree privately prepared, and from its boughs depended a variety of presents for members of the company. These gifts were encased in paper, with the names of the recipients written on each.

After spending a pleasant evening in her drawing-room, she invited us into the parlor, where the "surprise" awaited us. Each person commenced opening the packages bearing his or her address, and although every individual had one or more pretty presents, she had prepared a joke for each. Mr. Benedict, for instance, took off wrapper after wrapper from one of his packages, which at first was as large as his head, but after having removed some forty coverings of paper, it was reduced to a size smaller than his hand, and the removal of the last envelope exposed to view a piece of cavendish tobacco. One of my presents, choicely wrapped in a dozen coverings, was a jolly young Bacchus in Parian marble, intended as a pleasant hit at my temperance principles!

The night before New Year's day was spent in her apartment with great hilarity. Enlivened by music, singing, dancing and story-telling, the hours glided swiftly away. Miss Lind asked me if I would dance with her; I told her my education had been neglected in that line, and that I had never danced in my life. "That is all the better," said she; "now dance with me in a cotillion. I am sure you can do it." She was a beautiful dancer, and I never saw her laugh more heartily than she did

NEW YEAR'S EVE

at my awkwardness. She said she would give me the credit of being the poorest dancer she ever saw!

About a quarter before twelve, Jenny suddenly checked Mr. Burke — formerly celebrated as the musical prodigy "Master Burke" —, who was playing on the piano, by saying, "Pray let us have quiet; do you see, in fifteen minutes more, this year will be gone forever!"

She immediately took a seat, and rested her head upon her hand in silence. We all sat down, and for a quarter of an hour the most profound quiet reigned in the apartment. The remainder of the scene I transcribe from a description written the next day by Mrs. Lyman, who was present on the occasion:

"The clock of a neighboring church struck the knell of the dying year. All were silent — each heart was left to its own communings, and the bowed head and tearful eye told that memory was busy with the Past. It was a brief moment, but thoughts and feelings were crowded into it, which render it one never to be forgotten. A moment more — the last stroke of the clock had fallen upon the ear — the last faint vibration ceased; another period of time had passed forever away — a new one had dawned, in which each felt that they were to live and act. This thought recalled them to a full consciousness of the present, and all arose and quietly, but cordially, presented to each other the kind wishes of the season. As the lovely hostess pressed the hands of her guests, it was evident that she, too, had wept, — she, the gifted, the admired, the almost idolized one. Had she, too, cause for tears? Whence were they? — from the overflowings of a grateful heart, from tender associations, or from sad remembrances? None knew, none could ask, though they awakened deep and peculiar sympathy. And from one heart, at least, arose the prayer, that when the dial of time should mark the last hour of her earthly existence, she should greet its approach with joy and not with grief — that to her soul spirit-voices might whisper, 'Come, sweet sister! come to the realms of unfading light and love — come, join your seraphic tones with ours, in singing the praises of Him who loved

us, and gave himself for us' — while she, with meekly-folded hands and faith-uplifted eye, should answer, 'Yes, gladly and without fear I come, for I know that my Redeemer liveth.' "

I had arranged with a man in New York to transport furniture to Havana, provide a house, and board Jenny Lind and our immediate party during our stay. When we arrived, we found the building converted into a semi-hotel, and the apartments were any thing but comfortable. Jenny was vexed. Soon after dinner, she took a volante and an interpreter, and drove into the suburbs. She was absent four hours. Whither or why she had gone, none of us knew. At length she returned and informed us that she had hired a commodious furnished house in a delightful location outside the walls of the city, and invited us all to go and live with her during our stay in Havana, and we accepted the invitation. She was now freed from all annoyances; her time was her own, she received no calls, went and came when she pleased, had no meddlesome advisers about her, legal or otherwise, and was as merry as a cricket. We had a large court-yard in the rear of the house, and here she would come and romp and run, sing and laugh, like a young school-girl. "Now, Mr. Barnum, for another game of ball," she would say half a dozen times a day; whereupon, she would take an india-rubber ball (of which she had two or three) and commence a game of throwing and catching, which would be kept up until, being completely tired out, I would say, "I give it up." Then her rich, musical laugh would be heard ringing through the house, as she exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Barnum, you are too fat and too lazy; you cannot stand it to play ball with me!"

Her celebrated countrywoman, Miss Fredrika Bremer,² spent a few days with us very pleasantly, and it is difficult to conceive of a more delightful month than was passed by the entire party at Jenny Lind's house in the outskirts of Havana.

² This Swedish novelist (1801-1865) was well known to English-speaking readers through numerous translations (by Mary Howitt) of her works. She spent two years in America, and recorded her impressions of it in her "Homes in the New World." [Ed.]

CHAPTER XX

INCIDENTS OF THE TOUR

Protest against Prices in Havana—The Cubans Succumb—Jenny Lind Takes the City by Storm—A Magnificent Triumph—Count Penalver—A Splendid Offer—Mr. Brinckerhoff—Benefit for the Hospitals—Refusing to Receive Thanks—Vivalla and His Dog—Henry Bennett—His Partial Insanity—Our Voyage to New Orleans—The Editor of the “New York Herald” on Board—I Save the Life of James Gordon Bennett—Arrival at the Crescent City—Cheating the Crowd—A Duplicate Miss Lind—Up the Mississippi—Amusements on Board—In League with the Evil One—An Amazed Mulatto.

SOON after arriving in Havana, I discovered that a strong prejudice existed against our musical enterprise. I might rather say that the Habaneros, not accustomed to the high figure which tickets had commanded in the States, were determined on forcing me to adopt their opera prices, whereas I paid one thousand dollars per night for the Tacón Opera House, and other expenses being in proportion, I was determined to receive remunerating prices, or give no concerts. This determination on my part annoyed the Habaneros, who did not wish to be thought penurious, though they really were so. Their principal spite, therefore, was against me; and one of their papers politely termed me a “Yankee pirate,” who cared for nothing except their doubloons. They attended the concert, but were determined to show the great songstress no favor. I perfectly understood this feeling in advance, but studiously kept all knowledge of it from Miss Lind. I went to the first concert, therefore, with some misgivings in regard to her reception. The following, which I copy from the Havana correspondence of the “New York Tribune,” gives a correct account of it:

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Jenny Lind soon appeared, led on by Signor Belletti. Some three or four hundred persons clapped their hands at her appearance, but this token of approbation was instantly silenced by at least two thousand five hundred decided hisses. Thus, having settled the matter that there should be no forestalling of public opinion, and that if applause was given to Jenny Lind in that house it should first be incontestably earned, the most solemn silence prevailed. I have heard the Swedish Nightingale often in Europe as well as in America and have ever noticed a distinct tremulousness attending her first appearance in any city. Indeed this feeling was plainly manifested in her countenance as she neared the footlights; but when she witnessed the kind of reception in store for her — so different from anything she had reason to expect — her countenance changed in an instant to a haughty self-possession, her eye flashed defiance, and, becoming immovable as a statue, she stood there, perfectly calm and beautiful. She was satisfied that she now had an ordeal to pass and a victory to gain worthy of her powers. In a moment her eyes scanned the immense audience, the music began and then followed — how can I describe it? — such heavenly strains as I verily believe mortal never breathed except Jenny Lind, and mortal never heard except from her lips. Some of the oldest Castilians kept a frown upon their brow and a curling sneer upon their lip; their ladies, however, and most of the audience began to look surprised. The gushing melody flowed on increasing in beauty and glory. The *caballeros*, and *señoras* and *señoritas* began to look at each other; nearly all, however, kept their teeth clenched and their lips closed, evidently determined to resist to the last. The torrent flowed deeper and faster, the lark flew higher and higher, the melody grew richer and grander; still every lip was compressed. By and by, as the rich notes came dashing in rivers upon our enraptured ears, one poor critic involuntarily whispered a “brava.” This outbursting of the soul was instantly hissed down. The stream of harmony rolled on till, at the close, it made a clean sweep of every obstacle, and carried all before it. Not a vestige of opposition remained, but such a tremendous shout of applause as went up I never before heard.

The triumph was most complete. And how was Jenny Lind affected? She who stood a few moments previous like adamant, now trembled like

“ARE YOU SATISFIED?”

a reed in the wind before the storm of enthusiasm which her own simple notes had produced. Tremblingly, slowly, and almost bowing her face to the ground, she withdrew. The roar and applause of victory increased. “*Encore! encore! encore!*” came from every lip. She again appeared, and, courtesying low, again withdrew, but again, again, and again did they call her out and at every appearance the thunders of applause rang louder and louder. Thus five times was Jenny Lind called out to receive their unanimous and deafening plaudits.

I cannot express what my feelings were as I watched this scene from the dress circle. Poor Jenny! I deeply sympathized with her when I heard that first hiss. I indeed observed the resolute bearing which she assumed, but was apprehensive of the result. When I witnessed her triumph, I could not restrain the tears of joy that rolled down my cheeks; and rushing through a private box, I reached the stage just as she was withdrawing after the fifth encore. “God bless you, Jenny, you have settled them!” I exclaimed.

“Are you satisfied?” said she, throwing her arms around my neck. She, too, was crying with joy, and never before did she look so beautiful in my eyes as on that evening.

One of the Havana papers, notwithstanding the great triumph, continued to cry out for low prices. This induced many to absent themselves, expecting soon to see a reduction. It had been understood that we would give twelve concerts in Havana; but when they saw, after the fourth concert, which was devoted to charity, that no more were announced, they became uneasy. Committees waited upon us requesting more concerts, but we peremptorily declined. Some of the leading dons, among whom was Count Penalver, then offered to guarantee us \$25,000 for three concerts. My reply was, that there was not money enough on the island of Cuba to induce me to consent to it. That settled the matter, and gave us a pleasant opportunity for recreation.

We visited, by invitation, Mr. Brinckerhoff, the eminent American merchant at Matanzas, whom I had met at the same

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place three years previously, and who subsequently had visited my family in Connecticut. The gentlemanly host did everything in his power to render our stay agreeable; and Miss Lind was so delighted with his attentions and the interesting details of sugar and coffee plantations which we visited through his kindness, that as soon as she returned to Havana, she sent on the same tour of pleasure Mr. Benedict, who had been prevented by illness from accompanying us.

I found my little Italian plate-dancer, Vivalla,¹ in Havana. He called on me frequently. He was in great distress, having lost the use of his limbs on the left side of his body by paralysis. He was thus unable to earn a livelihood, although he still kept a performing dog, which turned a spinning-wheel and performed some curious tricks. One day, as I was passing him out of the front gate, Miss Lind inquired who he was. I briefly recounted to her his history. She expressed deep interest in his case, and said something should be set apart for him in the benefit which she was about to give for charity. Accordingly, when the benefit came off, Miss Lind appropriated \$500 to him, and I made the necessary arrangements for his return to his friends in Italy. At the same benefit \$4,000 were distributed between two hospitals and a convent.

A few mornings after the benefit our bell was rung, and the servant announced that I was wanted. I went to the door and found a large procession of children, neatly dressed and bearing banners, attended by ten or twelve priests, arrayed in their rich and flowing robes. I inquired their business, and was informed that they had come to see Miss Lind, to thank her in person for her benevolence. I took their message, and informed Miss Lind that the leading priests of the convent had come in great state to see and thank her. "I will not see them," she replied; "they have nothing to thank me for. If I have done good, it is no more than my duty, and it is my pleasure. I do not deserve their thanks, and I will not see them." I returned

¹ See chapters vii and viii. [Ed.]

“SUCH A GOOD LADY”

her answer, and the leaders of the grand procession went away in disappointment.

The same day Vivalla called, and brought her a basket of the most luscious fruit that he could procure. The little fellow was very happy and extremely grateful. Miss Lind had gone out for a ride.

“God bless her! I am so happy; she is such a good lady. I shall see my brothers and sisters again. Oh, she is a very good lady,” said poor Vivalla, overcome by his feelings. He begged me to thank her for him, and give her the fruit. As he was passing out of the door, he hesitated a moment, and then said, “Mr. Barnum, I should like so much to have the good lady see my dog turn a wheel; it is very nice; he can spin very good. Shall I bring the dog and wheel for her? She is such a good lady, I wish to please her very much.” I smiled, and told him she would not care for the dog; that he was quite welcome to the money, and that she refused to see the priests from the convent that morning, because she never received thanks for favors.

When Jenny came in I gave her the fruit, and laughingly told her that Vivalla wished to show her how his performing dog could turn a spinning-wheel.

“Poor man, poor man, do let him come; it is all the good creature can do for me,” exclaimed Jenny, and the tears flowed thick and fast down her cheeks. “I like that, I like that,” she continued; “do let the poor creature come and bring his dog. It will make him so happy.”

I confess it made me happy, and I exclaimed, for my heart was full, “God bless you, it will make him cry for joy; he shall come to-morrow.”

I saw Vivalla the same evening, and delighted him with the intelligence that Jenny would see his dog perform the next day, at four o'clock precisely.

“I will be punctual,” said Vivalla, in a voice trembling with emotion; “but I was *sure* she would like to see my dog perform.”

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

For full half an hour before the time appointed did Jenny Lind sit in her window on the second floor and watch for Vivalla and his dog. A few minutes before the appointed hour, she saw him coming. "Ah, here he comes! here he comes!" she exclaimed in delight, as she ran down stairs and opened the door to admit him. A negro boy was bringing the small spinning-wheel, while Vivalla led the dog. Handing the boy a silver coin, she motioned him away, and taking the wheel in her arms, she said, "This is very kind of you to come with your dog. Follow me. I will carry the wheel up stairs." Her servant offered to take the wheel, but no, she would let no one carry it but herself. She called us all up to her parlor, and for one full hour did she devote herself to the happy Italian. She went down on her knees to pet the dog and to ask Vivalla all sorts of questions about his performances, his former course of life, his friends in Italy, and his present hopes and determinations. Then she sang and played for him, gave him some refreshments, finally insisted on carrying his wheel to the door, and her servant accompanied Vivalla to his boarding-house.

Poor Vivalla! He was probably never so happy before, but his enjoyment did not exceed that of Miss Lind. That scene alone would have paid me for all my labors during the entire musical campaign. A few months later, however, the Havana correspondent of the "New York Herald" announced the death of Vivalla and stated that the poor Italian's last words were about Jenny Lind and Mr. Barnum.

When Captain Rawlings, of the steamer "Isabella," made his next return trip from Charleston, he brought a fine lot of game and invited Messrs. Benedict, Belletti, and myself to a breakfast on board, where we met Mr. John Howard, of the Irving House, New York, Mr. J. B. Monnot, of the New York Hotel, Mr. Mixer, of the Charleston Hotel, and Mr. Monroe, of one of the Havana hotels. The breakfast was a very nice one, and was accompanied by some "very fine old Madeira," which received the highest encomiums of the company.

"Now," said Captain Rawlings, "you must break your rule

“ *VERY OLD AND FINE* ”

once, Mr. Barnum, and wash down your game with a glass or two of this choice Madeira. It is very old and fine, as smooth as oil, and the game is hardly game without it. Do take some.”

I positively declined, saying I did not doubt that he had the genuine article for once, but that most of what was offered and sold as wine did not contain a single drop of the juice of the grape. This led to a general talk about the impositions practised, even in the best hotels, in serving customers with “fine old wines and liquors” at the bar and at the table, and some very curious and amusing stories were told and confessions made. But there could be no mistake about this Madeira; it was rich, rare, old, oily, and genuine in flavor and quality; all the connoisseurs at the table were unanimous in their verdict.

But when the breakfast was over and we were going ashore, as I was sitting next the captain in his own boat, he said to me:

“Barnum, that fine old Madeira is the real ‘game’ of my game breakfast; I wanted to test those experienced tasters, and I gave them some wine which I bought for a dollar and a half a gallon at a corner grocery in Charleston.”

In the party which accompanied me to Havana, was Mr. Henry Bennett, who formerly kept Peale’s Museum in New York, afterwards managing the same establishment for me when I purchased it, and he was now with me in the capacity of a ticket-taker. He was as honest a man as ever lived, and a good deal of a wag. I remember his going through the market once and running across a decayed actor who was reduced to tending a market stand. Bennett hailed him with “Hallo! what are you doing here; what are you keeping that old turkey for?”

“O! for a profit,” replied the actor.

“Prophet, prophet!” exclaimed Bennett. “Patriarch, you mean!”

With all his waggery he was subject at times to moods of the deepest despondency, bordering on insanity. Madness ran in his family. His brother, in a fit of frenzy, had blown his brains out. Henry himself had twice attempted his own life

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

while in my employ in New York. Some time after our present journey to Havana, I sent him to London. He conducted my business precisely as I directed, writing up his account with me correctly to a penny. Then handing it to a mutual friend with directions to give it to me when I arrived in London the following week, he went to his lodgings and committed suicide.

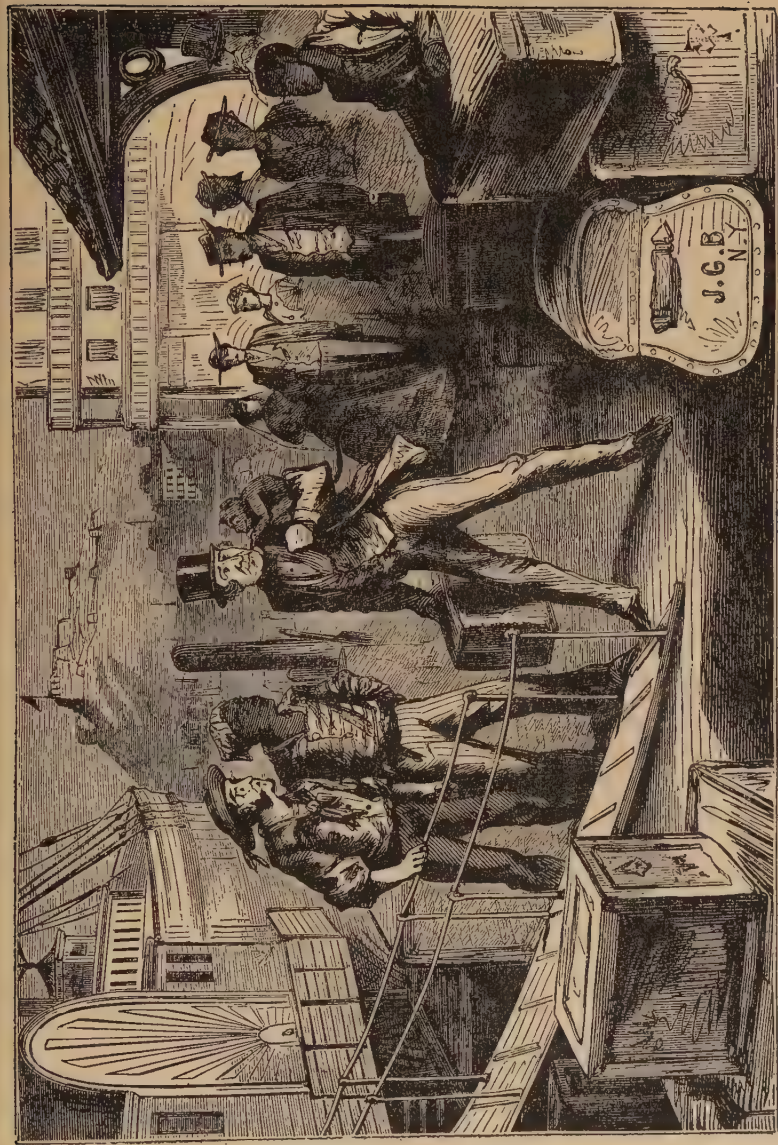
While we were in Havana, Bennett was so despondent at times that we were obliged to watch him carefully, lest he should do some damage to himself or others. When we left Havana for New Orleans, on board the steamer "Falcon," Mr. James Gordon Bennett, editor of the "New York Herald," and his wife were also passengers. After permitting one favorable notice in his paper, Bennett had turned around, as usual, and had abused Jenny Lind and bitterly attacked me. There was an estrangement, no new thing, between the editor and myself. The "Herald," in its desire to excite attention, has a habit of attacking public men and I had not escaped. I was always glad to get such notices, for they served as inexpensive advertisements to my Museum, and brought custom to me free of charge.

Ticket-taker Bennett, however, took much to heart the attacks of Editor Bennett upon Jenny Lind, and while in New York he threatened to cowhide his namesake, as so many men have actually done in days gone by, but I restrained him. When Editor Bennett came on board the "Falcon," he had in his arms a small pet monkey belonging to his wife, and the animal was placed in a safe place on the forward deck. When Henry Bennett saw the editor he said to a bystander:

"I would willingly be drowned if I could see that old scoundrel go to the bottom of the sea."

Several of our party overheard the remark and I turned laughingly to Bennett and said: "Nonsense; he can't harm any one and there is an old proverb about the impossibility of drowning those who are born to another fate."

That very night, however, as I stood near the cabin door, conversing with my treasurer and other members of my com-



JAMES GORDON BENNETT AND MRS. BENNETT'S PET MONKEY BOARD THE "FALCON" AT HAVANA
From the 1869 "Struggles and Triumphs."

TOO SERIOUS FOR A JOKE

pany, Henry Bennett came up to me with a wild air, and hoarsely whispered:

"Old Bennett has gone forward alone in the dark to feed his monkey, and d——n him, I am going to throw him overboard."

We were all startled, for we knew the man and he seemed terribly in earnest. Knowing how most effectively to address him at such times, I exclaimed:

"Ridiculous! you would not do such a thing."

"I swear I will," was his savage reply. I expostulated with him, and several of our party joined me.

"Nobody will know it," muttered the maniac, "and I shall be doing the world a favor."

I endeavored to awaken him to a sense of the crime he contemplated, assuring him that it could not possibly benefit any one, and that from the fact of the relations existing between the editor and myself, I should be the first to be accused of his murder. I implored him to go to his stateroom, and he finally did so, accompanied by some of the gentlemen of our party. I took pains to see that he was carefully watched that night, and, indeed, for several days, till he became calm again. He was a large, athletic man, quite able to pick up his namesake and drop him overboard. The matter was too serious for a joke, and we made little mention of it; but more than one of my party said then, and has said since, what I really believe to be true, that "James Gordon Bennett would have been drowned that night had it not been for P. T. Barnum."²

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In New Orleans the wharf was crowded by a great concourse of persons, as the steamer "Falcon" approached. Jenny Lind had enjoyed a month of quiet, and dreaded the excitement which she must now again encounter.

² Bennett was destined to live until 1872. In chapter xli we have some further account of him and his methods. [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

"Mr. Barnum, I am sure I can never get through that crowd," said she, in despair.

"Leave that to me. Remain quiet for ten minutes, and there shall be no crowd here," I replied.

Taking my daughter on my arm, she threw her veil over her face, and we descended the gangway to the dock. The crowd pressed around. I had beckoned for a carriage before leaving the ship.

"That's Barnum, I know him," called out several persons at the top of their voices.

"Open the way, if you please, for Mr. Barnum and Miss Lind!" cried Le Grand Smith over the railing of the ship, the deck of which he had just reached from the wharf.

"Don't crowd her, if you please, gentlemen," I exclaimed, and by dint of pushing, squeezing, and coaxing, we reached the carriage, and drove for the Pontalba buildings, where Miss Lind's apartments had been prepared, and the whole crowd came following at our heels. In a few minutes afterwards, Jenny and her companion came quietly in a carriage, and were in the house before the ruse was discovered. In answer to incessant calls, she appeared a moment upon the balcony, waved her handkerchief, received three hearty cheers, and the crowd dispersed.

A poor blind boy, residing in the interior of Mississippi, a flute-player and an ardent lover of music, visited New Orleans expressly to hear Jenny Lind. A subscription had been taken up among his neighbors to defray the expenses. This fact coming to the ears of Jenny, she sent for him, played and sang for him, gave him many words of joy and comfort, took him to her concerts, and sent him away considerably richer than he had ever been before.

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I made arrangements with the captain of the splendid steamer "Magnolia," of Louisville, to take our party as far

ABOARD THE "MAGNOLIA"

as Cairo, the junction of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, stipulating for sufficient delay in Natchez, Mississippi, and in Memphis, Tennessee, to give a concert in each place. It was no unusual thing for me to charter a steamboat or a special train of cars for our party. With such an enterprise as that, time and comfort were paramount to money.

The time on board the steamer was whiled away in reading, viewing the scenery of the Mississippi, and other diversions. One day we had a pleasant musical festival in the ladies' saloon for the gratification of the passengers, at which Jenny volunteered to sing without ceremony. It seemed to us she never sang so sweetly before. I also did my best to amuse my fellow passengers with anecdotes and the exhibition of sundry legerdemain tricks which I had been obliged to learn and use in the South years before and under far different circumstances than those which attended the performance now. Among other tricks, I caused a quarter of a dollar to disappear so mysteriously from beneath a card, that the mulatto barber on board came to the conclusion that I was in league with the devil.

The next morning I seated myself for the operation of shaving, and the colored gentleman ventured to dip into the mystery. "Beg pardon, Mr. Barnum, but I have heard a great deal about you, and I saw more than I wanted to see last night. Is it true that you have sold yourself to the devil, so that you can do what you've a mind to?"

"Oh, yes," was my reply, "that is the bargain between us."

"How long did you agree for?" was the question next in order.

"Only nine years," said I. "I have had three of them already. Before the other six are out, I shall find a way to non-plus the old gentleman, and I have told him so to his face."

At this avowal, a larger space of white than usual was seen in the darkey's eyes, and he inquired, "Is it by this bargain that you get so much money?"

"Certainly. No matter who has money, nor where he keeps it, in his box or till, or anywhere about him, I have only to speak the words, and it comes."

The shaving was completed in silence, but thought had been busy in the barber's mind, and he embraced the speediest opportunity to transfer his bag of coin to the iron safe in charge of the clerk.

The movement did not escape me, and immediately a joke was afoot. I had barely time to make two or three details of arrangement with the clerk, and resume my seat in the cabin, ere the barber sought a second interview, bent on testing the alleged powers of Beelzebub's colleague.

"Beg pardon, Mr. Barnum, but where is my money? Can you get it?"

"I do not want your money," was the quiet answer. "It is safe."

"Yes, I know it is safe — ha! ha! — it is in the iron safe in the clerk's office — safe enough from you!"

"It is not in the iron safe!" said I. This was said so quietly, yet positively, that the colored gentleman ran to the office, and inquired if all was safe. "All right," said the clerk. "Open, and let me see," replied the barber. The safe was unlocked and lo! the money was gone!

In mystified terror the loser applied to me for relief. "You will find the bag in your drawer," said I, and there it was found!

His curiosity was still great. "Please do another trick," said he.

"Very well," I replied, "stand perfectly still."

He did so, and I commenced muttering some mysterious words, as if performing an incantation.

"What are you doing?" asked the barber.

"I am changing you into a black cat," I replied, "but don't be afraid; I will change you back again, if I don't forget the words to do it with."

This was too much for the terrified darkey; with an awful

AN IMPROMPTU JIG

screech he rushed to the side of the boat resolved to drown rather than undergo such a transformation.

He was captured and brought back to me, when I dispelled his fright by explaining the way in which I had tricked him. Relieved and reassured, he clapped his hands and executed an impromptu jig, exclaiming, "Ha! ha! when I get back to New Orleans won't I come de Barnum ober dem niggers!"³

³ Joel Benton, a personal friend of Barnum, tells us (in "P. T. Barnum, Showman and Humorist," an article in the "Century" for August 1902) that the showman "had many of the mimetic faculties of the actor, particularly a mobile face and versatility of expression. He was not a bad ventriloquist, and in skilful acts of legerdemain he could have entertained audiences, with a little preliminary practice, night after night." [Ed.]

CHAPTER XXI

JENNY LIND

Arrival at St. Louis—Surprising Proposition of Miss Lind's Secretary—How the Manager Managed—Readiness to Cancel the Contract—Consultation with "Uncle Sol."—Barnum Not to Be Hired—A "Joke"—Temperance Lecture in the Theatre—Sol. Smith—A Comedian, Author, and Lawyer—Unique Dedication—Jenny Lind's Character and Charities—Sharp Words from the West—Selfish Advisers—Miss Lind's Generous Impulses—Her Simple and Childlike Character—Confessions of a Manager—Private Reputation and Public Renown—Character as a Stock in Trade—Le Grand Smith—Mr. Dolby—The Angelic Side Kept Out-side—My Own Share in the Public Benefits—Justice to Miss Lind and Myself.

ACCORDING to agreement, the "Magnolia" waited for us at Natchez and Memphis, and we gave profitable concerts at both places. The concert at Memphis was the sixtieth in the list since Miss Lind's arrival in America, and the first concert in St. Louis would be the sixty-first. When we reached that city, on the morning of the day when our first concert was to be given, Miss Lind's secretary came to me, commissioned, he said, by her, and announced that as sixty concerts had already taken place, she proposed to avail herself of one of the conditions of our contract, and cancel the engagement next morning. As this was the first intimation of the kind I had received, I was somewhat startled, though I assumed an entirely placid demeanor, and asked:

"Does Miss Lind authorize you to give me this notice?"

"I so understand it," was the reply.

I immediately reflected that if our contract was thus suddenly cancelled, Miss Lind was bound to repay to me all I had paid her over the stipulated \$1,000 for each concert, and a little calculation showed that the sum thus to be paid back was



From the lithograph cover of "Lonely I Wander," one of Mademoiselle Lind's songs.

GIOVANNI BELLETTI
Baritone

JENNY LIND
"The Swedish Nightingale"

JULIUS (JULES) BENEDICT
Musical Director

READY TO SETTLE

\$77,000, since she had already received from me \$137,000 for sixty concerts. In this view, I could not but think that this was a ruse of some of her advisers, and, possibly, that she might know nothing of the matter. So I told her secretary that I would see him again in an hour, and meanwhile I went to my old friend Mr. Sol. Smith for his legal and friendly advice.

I showed him my contract and told him how much I had been annoyed by the selfish and greedy hangers-on and advisers, legal and otherwise, of Jenny Lind. I talked to him about the "wheels within wheels" which moved this great musical enterprise, and asked and gladly accepted his advice, which mainly coincided with my own views of the situation. I then went back to the secretary and quietly told him that I was ready to settle with Miss Lind and to close the engagement.

"But," said he, manifestly "taken aback," "you have already advertised concerts in Louisville and Cincinnati, I believe."

"Yes," I replied; "but you may take my contracts for halls and printing off my hands at cost." I further said that he was welcome to the assistance of my agent who had made these arrangements, and, moreover, that I would cheerfully give my own services to help them through with these concerts, thus giving them a good start "on their own hook."

My liberality, which he acknowledged, emboldened him to make an extraordinary proposition:

"Now suppose," he asked, "Miss Lind should wish to give some fifty concerts in this country, what would you charge as manager, per concert?"

"A million dollars each, not one cent less," I replied. I was now thoroughly aroused; the whole thing was as clear as daylight, and I continued:

"Now we might as well understand each other; I don't believe Miss Lind has authorized you to propose to me to cancel our contract; but if she has, just bring me a line to that effect over her signature and her check for the amount due me by the

terms of that contract, some \$77,000, and we will close our business connections at once."

"But why not make a new arrangement," persisted the secretary, "for fifty concerts more, by which Miss Lind shall pay you liberally, say \$1,000 per concert?"

"Simply because I hired Miss Lind, and not she me," I replied, "and because I never ought to take a farthing less for my risk and trouble than the contract gives me. I have voluntarily paid Miss Lind more than twice as much as I originally contracted to pay her, or as she expected to receive when she first engaged with me. Now, if she is not satisfied, I wish to settle instantly and finally. If you do not bring me her decision to-day, I shall go to her for it to-morrow morning."

I met the secretary soon after breakfast next morning and asked him if he had a written communication for me from Miss Lind? He said he had not and that the whole thing was a "joke." He merely wanted, he added, to see what I would say to the proposition. I asked him if Miss Lind was in the "joke," as he called it? He hoped I would not inquire, but would let the matter drop. I went on, as usual, and gave four more concerts in St. Louis, and followed out my programme as arranged in other cities for many weeks following; nor at that time, nor at any time afterwards, did Miss Lind give me the slightest intimation that she had any knowledge of the proposition of her secretary to cancel our agreement or to employ me as her manager.

During our stay at St. Louis, I delivered a temperance lecture in the theatre, and at the close, among other signers, of the pledge, was my friend and adviser, Sol. Smith.¹ "Uncle Sol.," as every one called him, was a famous character in his time. He was an excellent comedian, an author, a manager, and a lawyer. For a considerable period of his life, he was largely concerned in theatricals in St. Louis, New Orleans, and other

¹ This was at Ludlow and Smith's Theatre. The concerts were given in Wyman's Hall. While the Lind party was in St. Louis, Charlotte Cushman was appearing at Bates' Theatre and General Tom Thumb happened to be in town. [Ed.]

“GREAT IMPRESARIO”

cities, and acquired a handsome property. He died at a ripe old age, in 1869, respected and lamented by all who knew him. I esteem it an honor to have been one of his intimate friends.

A year or two before he died, he published a very interesting volume, giving a full account of the leading incidents in his long and varied career as an actor and manager. He had previously, in 1854, published an autobiographical work, comprising an account of the “second seven years of his professional life,” together with sketches of adventure in after years, and entitled “The Theatrical Journey-Work and Anecdotal Recollections of Sol. Smith, Comedian, Attorney at Law,” etc. This unique work was preceded by a dedication which I venture to copy. It was as follows:

TO PHINEAS T. BARNUM, PROPRIETOR OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM,
ETC.

Great Impresario: Whilst you were engaged in your grand Jenny Lind speculation, the following conundrum went the rounds of the American newspapers:

“Why is it that Jenny Lind and Barnum will never fall out?” Answer: “Because he is always for-getting, and she is always for-giving.”

I have never asked you the question directly, whether you, Mr. Barnum, started that conundrum, or not; but I strongly suspect that you did. At all events, I noticed that your whole policy was concentrated into one idea — to make an angel of Jenny, and depreciate yourself in contrast.

You may remember that in this city (St. Louis), I acted in one instance as your “legal adviser,” and as such, necessarily became acquainted with all the particulars of your contract with the so-called Swedish Nightingale, as well as the various modifications claimed by that charitable lady, and submitted to by you after her arrival in this country; which modifications (I suppose it need no longer be a secret) secured to her — besides the original stipulation of one thousand dollars for every concert, attendants, carriages, assistant artists, and a pompous and extravagant retinue, fit (only) for a European princess — one half of the profits of each performance. You may also remember

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the legal advice I gave you on the occasion referred to, and the salutary effect of your following it. You must remember the extravagant joy you felt afterwards, in Philadelphia, when the "Angel" made up her mind to avail herself of one of the stipulations in her contract, to break off at the end of a hundred nights, and even bought out seven of that hundred — supposing that she could go on without your aid as well as with it. And you cannot but remember, how, like a rocket-stick she dropped, when your business connection with her ended, and how she "fizzed out" the remainder of her concert nights in this part of the world, and soon afterwards retired to her domestic blissitude in Sweden.

You know, Mr. Barnum, if you would only tell, which of the two it was that was "for-getting," and which "for-giving"; and you also know who actually gave the larger portion of those sums which you heralded to the world as the sole gifts of the "divine Jenny."

Of all your speculations — from the negro centenarian, who didn't nurse General Washington, down to the Bearded Woman of Genoa² — there was not one which required the exercise of so much humbuggery as the Jenny Lind concerts; and I verily believe there is no man living, other than yourself, who could, or would, have risked the enormous expenditure of money necessary to carry them through successfully — travelling, with sixty artists, four thousand miles, and giving ninety-three concerts, at an actual cost of forty-five hundred dollars each, is what no other man would have undertaken — you accomplished this, and pocketed by the operation but little less than two hundred thousand dollars! Mr. Barnum, you are yourself, alone!

I honor you, O Great Impresario, as the most successful manager in America or any other country. Democrat, as you are, you can give a practical lesson to the aristocrats of Europe how to live. At your

² This should presumably be Geneva, as a bearded lady advertised as "the most astounding wonder of the nineteenth century" and exhibited by Barnum at the American Museum in 1853, was born at Versoix, Switzerland, in the canton of Geneva. She was Mme. Josephine Fortune Clofullia, described as being about twenty-five years of age in June 1853. An advertisement in the "Illustrated News" of June 25 declares that Madame Clofullia "presents to all eyes the completely full grown beard and whiskers that the most fastidious dandy would be proud to wear, and that in color, shape, size, thickness, natural growth and beauty, put at a single glance all incredulity at defiance!" [Ed.]

“UPON THE WATERS”

beautiful and tasteful residence, “Iranistan” (I don’t like the name, though) you can and do entertain your friends with a warmth of hospitality only equalled by that of the great landed proprietors of the old country, or of our own “sunny South.” Whilst riches are pouring into your coffers from your various “ventures” in all parts of the world, you do not hoard your immense means, but continually “cast them forth upon the waters,” rewarding labor, encouraging the arts, and lending a helping hand to industry in all its branches. Not content with doing all this, you deal telling blows, whenever opportunity offers, upon the monster Intemperance. Your labors in this great cause alone, should entitle you to the thanks of all good men, women, and children in the land. Mr. Barnum, you deserve all your good fortune, and I hope you may long live to enjoy your wealth and honor.

As a small instalment towards the debt, I, as one of the community, owe you, and with the hope of affording you an hour’s amusement (if you can spare that amount of time from your numerous avocations to read it), I present you with this little volume, containing a very brief account of some of my “journey-work” in the south and west; and remain, very respectfully,

Your friend, and affectionate uncle,

SOL. SMITH.

Chouteau Avenue, St. Louis,

Nov. 1, 1854.

“Uncle” Sol. Smith must be held solely responsible for his extravagant estimate of P. T. Barnum, and for his somewhat deprecatory view of the attributes of the “divine Jenny.” It is true that he derived many of his impressions of Miss Lind from the annoying circumstances that compelled me to seek his professional advice and assistance in St. Louis, when Jenny Lind’s secretary came to me with an assumed authorization from her to abruptly close our engagement. But when Sol. Smith’s dedication was first published, there were plenty of people and papers throughout the land that were eager to catch up and indorse this new view of Miss Lind’s character. The Athenians were sometimes sick, no doubt, of hearing Aris-

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

tides always called "the Just." Yet, some of the sharp things which Sol. Smith means to say about Miss Lind, apply rather to the selfish persons who, unfortunately, were more in her confidence than I ever aspired to be, and who assumed to advise her and thus easily perverted her better judgment.

With all her excellent and even extraordinarily good qualities, however, Jenny Lind was human, though the reputation she bore in Europe for her many charitable acts led me to believe, till I knew her, that she was nearly perfect. I think now that her natural impulses were more simple, childlike, pure, and generous than those of almost any other person I ever met. But she had been petted, almost worshipped, so long, that it would have been strange indeed if her unbounded popularity had not in some degree affected her to her hurt, and it must not be thought extraordinary if she now and then exhibited some phase of human weakness.

Like most persons of uncommon talent, she had a strong will which, at times, she found ungovernable; but if she was ever betrayed into a display of ill-temper she was sure to apologize and express her regret afterwards. Le Grand Smith, who was quite intimate with her, and who was my right-hand man during the entire Lind engagement, used sometimes to say to me:

"Well, Mr. Barnum, you have managed wonderfully in always keeping Jenny's 'angel' side outside with the public."

More than one Englishman—I may instance Mr. Dolby, Mr. Dickens's agent during his last visit to America³—expressed surprise at the confirmed impression of "perfection" entertained by the general American public in regard to the Swedish Nightingale. These things are written with none but the kindest feelings towards the sweet songstress, and only to modify the too current ideas of superhuman excellence which cannot be characteristic of any mortal being.

As I have before intimated in giving details of my manage-

³ George Dolby. Dickens' second reading tour in the United States was in 1867. See J. T. Fields' "Yesterdays with Authors" (1871). [Ed.]

AN ADDENDUM

ment of the enterprise, believing, as I did when I engaged her, in her "angelic" reputation, I am frank enough to confess that I considered her private character a valuable adjunct, even in a business point of view, to her renown as a singer. I admit that I took her charities into account as part of my "stock in trade." Whenever she sang for a public or private charity, she gave her voice, which was worth a thousand dollars to her every evening. At such times, I always insisted upon paying for the hall, orchestra, printing, and other expenses, because I felt able and willing to contribute my full share towards the worthy objects which prompted these benefits.

This narration would be incomplete if I did not add the following:

We were in Havana when I showed to Miss Lind a paper containing the conundrum on "for-getting" and "for-giving," at which she laughed heartily, but immediately checked herself and said:

"O! Mr. Barnum, this is not fair; you know that you really give more than I do from the proceeds of every one of these charity concerts."

And it is but just to her to say that she frequently remonstrated with me and declared that the actual expenses should be deducted and the thus lessened sum devoted to the charity for which the concert might be given; but I always laughingly told her that I must do my part, give my share, and that if it was purely a business operation, "bread cast upon the waters," it would return, perhaps, buttered; for the larger her reputation for liberality, the more liberal the public would surely be to us and to our enterprise.

I have no wish to conceal these facts; and I certainly have no desire to receive a larger meed of praise than my qualified generosity merits. Justice to myself and to my management, as well as to Miss Lind, seems to permit, if not to demand, this explanation.

CHAPTER XXII

CLOSE OF THE CAMPAIGN

Penitent Ticket Purchasers — Visit to The Hermitage — "April Fool" Fun — The Mammoth Cave — Signor Salvi — George D. Prentice — Performance in a Pork House — Ruse at Cincinnati — Annoyances at Pittsburgh — Le Grand Smith's Grand Joke — Return to New York — The Final Concerts in Castle Garden and Metropolitan Hall — The Advisers Appear — The Ninety-third Concert — My Offer to Close the Engagement — Miss Lind's Letter Accepting My Proposition — Story about an "Improper Place" — Jenny's Concerts on Her Own Account — Her Marriage to Mr. Otto Goldschmidt — Cordial Relations between Madame Goldschmidt and Myself — At Home Again — Statement of the Total Receipts of the Concerts.

AFTER five concerts in St. Louis, we went to Nashville, Tennessee, where we gave our sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh concerts in this country. At the first ticket auction in that city, the excitement was considerable and the bidding spirited, as was generally the case. After the auction was over, one of my men, happening in at a dry-goods store in the town, heard the proprietor say, "I'll give five dollars to any man who will take me out and give me a good horse-whipping! I deserve it, and am willing to pay for having it done. To think that I should have been such a fool as to have paid forty-eight dollars for four tickets for my wife, two daughters, and myself, to listen to music for only two hours, makes me mad with myself, and I want to pay somebody for giving me a thundering good horse-whipping!" I am not sure that others have not experienced a somewhat similar feeling, when they became cool and rational, and the excitement of novelty and competition had passed away.

While at Nashville, Jenny Lind, accompanied by my daughter, Mrs. Lyman, and myself, visited The Hermitage, the late residence of General Jackson. On that occasion, for the first

MANUFACTURED NEWS

time that season, we heard the wild mocking-birds singing in the trees. This gave Jenny Lind great delight, as she had never before heard them sing except in their wire-bound cages.

The first of April occurred while we were in Nashville. I was considerably annoyed during the forenoon by the calls of members of the company who came to me under the belief that I had sent for them. After dinner I concluded to give them all a touch of "April fool." The following article, which appeared the next morning in the Nashville "Daily American," my amanuensis having imparted the secret to the editor, will show how it was done:

A series of laughable jokes came off yesterday at the Veranda in honor of All Fool's Day. Mr. Barnum was at the bottom of the mischief. He managed in some mysterious manner to obtain a lot of blank telegraphic despatches and envelopes from one of the offices in this city, and then went to work and manufactured "astounding intelligence" for most of the parties composing the Jenny Lind suite. Almost every person in the company received a telegraphic despatch written under the direction of Barnum. Mr. Barnum's daughter was informed that her mother, her cousin, and several other relatives were waiting for her in Louisville, and various other important and extraordinary items of domestic intelligence were communicated to her. Mr. Le Grand Smith was told by a despatch from his father that his native village in Connecticut was in ashes, including his own homestead, etc. Several of Barnum's employees had most liberal offers of engagements from banks and other institutions at the North. Burke, and others of the musical professors, were offered princely salaries by opera managers, and many of them received most tempting inducements to proceed immediately to the World's Fair in London.

One married gentleman in Mr. Barnum's suite received the gratifying intelligence that he had for two days been the father of a pair of bouncing boys (mother and children doing well), an event which he had been anxiously looking for during the week, though on a somewhat more limited scale. In fact, nearly every person in the party engaged by Barnum received some extraordinary telegraphic intelligence, and as

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

the great impresario managed to have the despatches delivered simultaneously, each recipient was for some time busily occupied with his own personal news.

By and by each began to tell his neighbor his good or bad tidings; and each was, of course, rejoiced or grieved according to circumstances. Several gave Mr. Barnum notice of their intention to leave him, in consequence of better offers; and a number of them sent off telegraphic despatches and letters by mail, in answer to those received.

The man who had so suddenly become the father of twins, telegraphed to his wife to "be of good cheer," and that he would "start for home to-morrow." At a late hour last night the secret had not got out, and we presume that many of the victims will first learn from our columns that they have been taken in by Barnum and All Fool's Day!

From Nashville, Jenny Lind and a few friends went by way of the Mammoth Cave to Louisville, while the rest of the party proceeded by steamboat.

While in Havana, I engaged Signor Salvi for a few months, to begin about the 10th of April. He joined us at Louisville, and sang in the three concerts there, with great satisfaction to the public. Mr. George D. Prentice,¹ of the Louisville "Journal," and his beautiful and accomplished lady, who had contributed much to the pleasure of Miss Lind and our party, accompanied us to Cincinnati.

A citizen of Madison had applied to me on our first arrival in Louisville, for a concert in that place. I replied that the town was too small to afford it, whereupon he offered to take the management of it into his own hands, and pay me \$5,000 for the receipts. The last concert at Louisville, and the concerts at Natchez and Wheeling were given under a similar agreement, though with better pecuniary results than at Madison. As the steamer from Louisville to Cincinnati would arrive at Madison about sundown, and would wait long enough for us to give a concert, I agreed to his proposition.

¹ Prentice (1802-1870) hailed originally from Connecticut and became the "Journal's" editor in 1831. Both his humorous sketches and his verses were in favor in their time; and some of the verses may still be found in anthologies. [Ed.]

“ THAT WON’T DO ! ”

We were not a little surprised to learn upon arriving, that the concert must be given in a “pork house” — a capacious shed which had been fitted up and decorated for the occasion. We concluded, however, that if the inhabitants were satisfied with the accommodations, we ought not to object. The person who had contracted for the concert came \$1,300 short of his agreement, which I consequently lost, and at ten o’clock we were again on board the fine steamer “Ben Franklin” bound for Cincinnati.

The next morning the crowd upon the wharf was immense. I was fearful that an attempt to repeat the New Orleans ruse with my daughter would be of no avail, as the joke had been published in the Cincinnati papers; so I gave my arm to Miss Lind, and begged her to have no fears, for I had hit upon an expedient which would save her from annoyance. We then descended the plank to the shore, and as soon as we had touched it, Le Grand Smith called out from the boat, as if he had been one of the passengers, “That’s no go, Mr. Barnum; you can’t pass your daughter off for Jenny Lind this time.”

The remark elicited a peal of merriment from the crowd, several persons calling out, “That won’t do, Barnum! you may fool the New Orleans folks, but you can’t come it over the ‘Buckeyes.’ We intend to stay here until you bring out Jenny Lind!” They readily allowed me to pass with the lady whom they supposed to be my daughter, and in five minutes afterwards the Nightingale was complimenting Mr. Coleman upon the beautiful and commodious apartments which were devoted to her in the Burnet House. The crowd remained an hour on the wharf before they would be convinced that the person whom they took for my daughter was in fact the veritable Swede. When this was discovered, a general laugh followed the exclamation from one of the victims, “Well, Barnum has humbugged us after all!”

In passing up the river to Pittsburgh, the boat waited four hours to enable us to give a concert in Wheeling. It was managed by a couple of gentlemen in that city, who purchased it

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

for \$5,000 in advance, by which they made a handsome profit for their trouble. The concert was given in a church.

At Pittsburgh, the open space surrounding the concert room became crowded with thousands of persons, who, foolishly refusing to accommodate each other by listening to the music, disturbed the concert and determined us to leave the next morning for Baltimore, instead of giving a second concert that had been advertised.

Le Grand Smith here paid me off for my "April-fool" joke. He induced a female of his acquaintance to call on me and reveal an arrangement which she pretended accidentally to have overheard between some scoundrels, who were resolved to stop our stage coach on the Alleghany mountains and commit highway robbery. The story seemed incredible, and yet the woman related it with so much apparent sincerity that I swallowed the bait, and remitting to New York all the money I had, except barely enough to defray our expenses to Baltimore, I purchased several revolvers for such members of the company as were not already provided, and we left Pittsburgh armed to the teeth! Fortunately, Jenny and several of the company had left before I made this grand discovery, and hence she was saved any apprehensions on the subject. It is needless to say we found no use for our firearms.

We reached New York early in May, 1851, and gave fourteen concerts in Castle Garden and Metropolitan Hall. The last of these made the ninety-second regular concert under our engagement. Jenny Lind had now again reached the atmosphere of her legal and other "advisers," and I soon discovered the effects of their influence. I, however, cared little what course they advised her to pursue. I indeed wished they would prevail upon her to close with her hundredth concert, for I had become weary with constant excitement and unremitting exertions. I was confident that if she undertook to give concerts on her own account, she would be imposed upon and harassed in a thousand ways; yet I felt it would be well for her to have a trial at it, if she saw fit to credit her advisers' assurance that

A PRETEXT

I had not managed the enterprise as successfully as it might have been done.

At about the eighty-fifth concert, therefore, I was most happy to learn from her lips that she had concluded to pay the forfeiture of twenty-five thousand dollars, and terminate the concerts with the one hundredth.

We went to Philadelphia, where I had advertised the ninety-second, ninety-third, and ninety-fourth concerts, and had engaged the large National Theatre on Chestnut street. It had been used for equestrian and theatrical entertainments, but was now thoroughly cleansed and fitted up by Max Maretzek for Italian opera. It was a convenient place for our purpose. One of her "advisers," a subordinate in her employ, who was already itching for the position of manager, made the selection of this building a pretext for creating dissatisfaction in the mind of Miss Lind. I saw the influences which were at work, and not caring enough for the profits of the remaining seven concerts to continue the engagement at the risk of disturbing the friendly feelings which had hitherto uninterruptedly existed between that lady and myself, I wrote her a letter offering to relinquish the engagement, if she desired it, at the termination of the concert which was to take place that evening, upon her simply allowing me a thousand dollars per concert for the seven which would yet remain to make up the hundred, besides paying me the sum stipulated as a forfeiture for closing the engagement at the one-hundredth concert. Towards evening I received the following reply:

To P. T. Barnum, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR:— I accept your proposition to close our contract to-night, at the end of the ninety-third concert, on condition of my paying you seven thousand dollars, in addition to the sum I forfeit under the condition of finishing the engagement at the end of one hundred concerts.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

JENNY LIND.

Philadelphia, 9th of June, 1851.

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

I met her at the concert in the evening, and she was polite and friendly as ever. Between the first and second parts of the concert, I introduced General Welch, the lessee of the National Theatre, who informed her that he was quite willing to release me from my engagement of the building, if she did not desire it longer. She replied that, upon trial, she found it much better than she expected, and she would therefore retain it for the remainder of the concerts.

In the mean time, her advisers had been circulating the story that I had compelled her to sing in an improper place, and when they heard she had concluded to remain there, they beset her with arguments against it, until at last she consented to remove her concerts to a smaller hall.

I had thoroughly advertised the three concerts, in the newspapers within a radius of one hundred miles from Philadelphia, and had sent admission tickets to the editors. On the day of the second concert, one of the new agents, who had indirectly aided in bringing about the dissolution of our engagement, refused to recognize these tickets. I urged upon him the injustice of such a course, but received no satisfaction. I then stated the fact to Miss Lind, and she gave immediate orders that these tickets should be received. Country editors' tickets, which were offered after I left Philadelphia, were, however, refused by her agents (contrary to Miss Lind's wish and knowledge), and the editors, having come from a distance with their wives, purchased tickets, and I subsequently remitted the money to numerous gentlemen, whose complimentary tickets were thus repudiated.

Jenny Lind gave several concerts with varied success, and then retired to Niagara Falls, and afterwards to Northampton, Massachusetts. While sojourning at the latter place, she visited Boston and was married to Mr. Otto Goldschmidt, a German composer and pianist,² to whom she was much attached, and who had studied music with her in Germany. He played several

² In February 1852. Goldschmidt (1829-1907) later taught in the Royal Academy of Music, London, and became its vice-principal. [Ed.]

“IT WOULD BE UNGRATEFUL”

times in our concerts. He was a very quiet, inoffensive gentleman, and an accomplished musician.

I met her several times after our engagement terminated. She was always affable. On one occasion, while passing through Bridgeport, she told me that she had been sadly harassed in giving her concerts. “People cheat me and swindle me very much,” said she, “and I find it very annoying to give concerts on my own account.”

I was always supplied with complimentary tickets when she gave concerts in New York, and on the occasion of her last appearance in America, I visited her in her room back of the stage, and bade her and her husband adieu, with my best wishes. She expressed the same feeling to me in return. She told me she should never sing much, if any more, in public; but I reminded her that a good Providence had endowed her with a voice which enabled her to contribute in an eminent degree to the enjoyment of her fellow beings, and if she no longer needed the large sums of money which they were willing to pay for this elevating and delightful entertainment, she knew by experience what a genuine pleasure she would receive by devoting the money to the alleviation of the wants and sorrows of those who needed it.

“Ah! Mr. Barnum,” she replied, “that is very true, and it would be ungrateful in me to not continue to use for the benefit of the poor and lowly, that gift which our kind Heavenly Father has so graciously bestowed upon me. Yes, I will continue to sing so long as my voice lasts, but it will be mostly for charitable objects, for I am thankful to say I have all the money which I shall ever need.” Pursuant to this resolution, the larger portion of the concerts which this noble lady has given since her return to Europe, have been for objects of benevolence.

If she consents to sing for a charitable object in London, for instance, the fact is not advertised at all, but the tickets are readily disposed of in a private, quiet way, at a guinea and half a guinea each.

After so many months of anxiety, labor, and excitement, in

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

the Jenny Lind enterprise, it will readily be believed that I desired tranquillity. I spent a week at Cape May, and then came home to Iranistan, where I remained during the entire summer.

JENNY LIND CONCERTS

TOTAL RECEIPTS, EXCEPTING OF CONCERTS DEVOTED TO CHARITY

—	New York, . .	\$17,864.05	No. 36.	Baltimore, . .	\$8,357.05
—	" . .	14,203.03	37.	" . .	8,406.50
No. 1.	" . .	\$12,519.59	38.	" . .	8,121.33
2.	" . .	14,266.09	39.	Washington City, . .	6,878.55
3.	" . .	12,174.74	40.	" . .	8,507.05
4.	" . .	16,028.39	41.	Richmond, . .	12,385.21
5.	Boston, . . .	16,479.50	42.	Charleston, . .	6,775.00
6.	" . . .	11,848.62	43.	" . .	3,653.75
7.	" . . .	8,639.92	44.	Havana, . . .	4,666.17
8.	" . . .	10,169.25	45.	" . . .	2,837.92
9.	Providence, . .	6,525.54	46.	" . . .	2,931.95
10.	Boston, . . .	10,524.87	47.	New Orleans, . .	12,599.85
11.	" . . .	5,240.00	48.	" . .	10,210.42
12.	" . . .	7,586.00	49.	" . .	8,131.15
13.	Philadelphia, . .	9,291.25	50.	" . .	6,019.85
14.	" . .	7,547.00	51.	" . .	6,644.00
15.	" . .	8,458.65	52.	" . .	9,720.80
16.	New York, . .	6,415.90	53.	" . .	7,545.50
17.	" . .	4,009.70	54.	" . .	6,053.50
18.	" . .	5,982.00	55.	" . .	4,850.25
19.	" . .	8,007.10	56.	" . .	4,495.35
20.	" . .	6,334.20	57.	" . .	6,630.35
21.	" . .	9,429.15	58.	" . .	4,745.10
22.	" . .	9,912.17	59.	Natchez, . . .	5,000.00
23.	" . .	5,773.40	60.	Memphis, . . .	4,539.56
24.	" . .	4,993.50	61.	St. Louis, . . .	7,811.85
25.	" . .	6,670.15	62.	" . . .	7,961.92
26.	" . .	9,840.33	63.	" . . .	7,708.70
27.	" . .	7,097.15	64.	" . . .	4,086.50
28.	" . .	8,263.30	65.	" . . .	3,044.70
29.	" . .	10,570.25	66.	Nashville, . .	7,786.30
30.	" . .	10,646.45	67.	" . .	4,248.00
31.	Philadelphia, . .	5,480.75	68.	Louisville, . .	7,833.90
32.	" . .	5,728.65	69.	" . .	6,595.60
33.	" . .	3,709.88	70.	" . .	5,000.00
34.	" . .	4,815.48	71.	Madison, . . .	3,693.25
35.	Baltimore, . .	7,117.00	72.	Cincinnati, . .	9,339.75

RECEIPTS

No. 73. Cincinnati, . .	\$11,001.50	No. 84. New York, . .	\$6,641.00
74. " . .	8,446.30	85. " . .	6,917.13
75. " . .	8,954.18	86. " . .	6,642.04
76. " . .	6,500.40	87. " . .	3,738.75
77. Wheeling, . .	5,000.00	88. " . .	4,335.28
78. Pittsburg, . .	7,210.58	89. " . .	5,339.23
79. New York, . .	6,858.42	90. " . .	4,087.03
80. " . .	5,453.00	91. " . .	5,717.00
81. " . .	5,463.70	92. " . .	9,525.80
82. " . .	7,378.35	93. Philadelphia, . .	3,852.75
83. " . .	7,179.27		

CHARITY CONCERTS. — Of Miss Lind's half receipts of the first two Concerts, she devoted \$10,000 to charity in New York. She afterwards gave Charity Concerts in Boston, Baltimore, Charleston, Havana, New Orleans, New York, and Philadelphia, and donated large sums for the like purposes in Richmond, Cincinnati, and elsewhere. There were also several Benefit Concerts, for the Orchestra, Le Grand Smith, and other persons and objects.

RECAPITULATION

	CONCERTS	RECEIPTS	AVERAGE
NEW YORK	35	\$286,216.64	\$8,177.50
PHILADELPHIA	8	48,884.41	6,110.55
BOSTON	7	70,388.16	10,055.45
PROVIDENCE	1	6,525.54	6,525.54
BALTIMORE	4	32,101.88	8,000.47
WASHINGTON	2	15,385.60	7,692.80
RICHMOND	1	12,385.21	12,385.21
CHARLESTON	2	10,428.75	5,214.37
HAVANA	3	10,436.04	3,478.68
NEW ORLEANS	12	87,646.12	7,303.84
NATCHEZ	1	5,000.00	5,000.00
MEMPHIS	1	4,539.56	4,539.56
ST. LOUIS	5	30,613.67	6,122.73
NASHVILLE	2	12,034.30	6,017.15
LOUISVILLE	3	19,429.50	6,476.50
MADISON	1	3,693.25	3,693.25
CINCINNATI	5	44,242.13	8,848.43
WHEELING	1	5,000.00	5,000.00
PITTSBURG.	1	7,210.58	7,210.58
TOTAL	95	\$712,161.34	\$7,496.43

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

JENNY LIND'S RECEIPTS

From the Total Receipts of 95 Concerts	\$712,161.34	
Deduct the receipts of the first two, which, as between P. T. Barnum and Jenny Lind, were aside from the contract, and are not numbered in the Table		32,067.08
Total Receipts of Concerts from Nos. 1 to 93	\$680,094.26	
Deduct the receipts of the 28 Concerts each of which fell short of \$5,500	\$123,311.15	
Also deduct \$5,500 for each of the remaining 65 Concerts	357,500.00	480,811.15
Leaving the total excess, as above	\$199,283.11	
Being equally divided, Miss Lind's portion was		\$ 99,641.55
I paid her \$1,000 for each of the 93 Concerts		93,000.00
Also one half the receipts of the first two Concerts		16,033.54
Amount paid to Jenny Lind		\$208,675.09
She refunded to me as forfeiture, per contract, in case she withdrew after the 100th Concert	\$25,000	
She also paid me \$1,000 each for the seven Concerts relinquished	7,000	32,000.00
JENNY LIND's net avails of 95 Concerts		\$176,675.09
P. T. BARNUM's gross receipts, after paying Miss Lind		535,486.25
TOTAL RECEIPTS of 95 Concerts		\$712,161.34

PRICE OF TICKETS. — The highest prices paid for tickets were at auction as follows: — John N. Genin, in New York, \$225; Ossian E. Dodge, in Boston, \$625; Col. William C. Ross, in Providence, \$650; M. A. Root, in Philadelphia, \$625; Mr. D'Arcy, in New Orleans, \$240; a keeper of a refreshment saloon in St. Louis, \$150; a Daguerreotypist, in Baltimore, \$100. I cannot now recall the names of the last two.³ After the sale of the first ticket, the premium usually fell to \$20, and so downward in the scale of figures. The fixed price of tickets ranged from \$7 to \$3. Promenade tickets were from \$2 to \$1 each.

³ From Rosenberg (p. 183) may be supplied the name of the former: "Mr. Byron, who kept the liquor saloon immediately adjoining Bates' Theatre." We may add, on the same authority, that in Cincinnati "a tailor, named M'Elevy" paid the top price, \$575. [Ed.]

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Courtesy of the Conn. Historical Society.

urniture delivered in any part of the city
of charge; also packed in the best possible manner
to go out of town. [May 21-1 8w96] E. & D.



GRAND ENTRANCE OF THE ASIATIC CARAVAN, *Museum and Menagerie*

P. T. BARNUM,
Being the largest exhibition in the world and double
the size of all the other traveling menageries in the
U.S. put together.

A TEAM OF TEN ELEPHANTS
will draw the GREAT CAR OF JUGGERNAUT.

A YOUNG CALF ELEPHANT,

only six months old and $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in height, will carry
upon his back around the interior of the colossal pavil-
ion, the Lilliputian General TOM THUMB. The mag-
nificent cortege comprises 110 HORSES and 90 MEN!

The pavilion of exhibition will accommodate 15,000
spectators at once. All the finest wild animals ever
exhibited in this country, are now attached to this ex-
hibition, being selected at immense cost from the vari-
ous minor establishments north and south.

SIX BEAUTIFUL LIONS!

fresh from their native forests.

A BURMESE BULL,
from the Island of Ceylon, worshipped there by the
Pagan natives, and recently taken from their idolatrous
temples. The drove of elephants was captured in the
jungles of Central Ceylon, by Messrs. STEBBINS, JUNE
and GEO. NUTTER, accompanied by 160 natives, after
a pursuit of three weeks and four days in the jungles.
They were finally entrapped and secured in a

KKAUL, OR INDIAN IRAP,
of enormous dimensions and prodigious strength, where
the elephants were subdued. The Calf Elephant ac-
companies its dam, and was weaned on its passage
from India.

A NATIVE CEYLON CHIEF belonging to the wild
and wandering tribe of Kaffirs, whose ferocious habits
are vividly described by Eugene Sue in the "Wander-
ing Jew," accompanies the elephants.

A magnificent Brass Band will play during the exhi-
bition, and accompany the Triumphal Procession.

P. T. BARNUM, Proprietor of the New York and
Philadelphia Museums, has the honor to announce that,
encouraged by the brilliant success which has attended
his enterprise of bringing JENNY LIND before the Amer-
ican People, he has been led to form the project of
organizing a vast travelling

MUSEUM OF WONDERS!

Which comprises a greater variety of attractions, and
more extraordinary novelties, than any travelling ex-
hibition in the world. Every feature of this mammoth
establishment is of a peculiar and interesting nature,
and the whole is produced upon a gigantic scale of mag-
nitude. The travelling paraphernalia of the American
Museum, as it enters each town, is preceded by the gor-
geous—

CAR OF JUGGERNAUT,

Drawn by TEN ELEPHANTS, superbly compared,
being an accurate model of that terrible engine of idol-
atrous sacrifice, finished and decorated in all the ex-
travagance of the Hindoo style. Following this mon-
ster vehicle, is a long procession of costly cages and
carriages, the whole forming a spectacle of more than
Oriental splendor. The exhibition will take place with-
in a magnificent VARIEGATED PAVILION, composed of
American Flags of a water-proof fabric. The real, gen-
uine, original GEN. TOM THUMB

Is attached to this exhibition, and will appear in all his
Performances as given before the principal crowned
heads of Europe, including SOXES, DANCES, GRECIAN
STATUES, and his admired personations of NAPOLEON
and FRDERICK THE GREAT. The little General is nine-
teen years of age, weighs only FIFTEEN POUNDS, and
is but *twenty-eight inches high!* Also engaged,

MR. NELLIS,

The man without arms, who will execute his extraordi-
nary feats of loading and firing a pistol with his toes;
cutting profile likenesses; shooting at a mark with bow
and arrow; playing upon the Accordion and Violincel-
lo, &c. Mr. Nellis, in these performances, exhibits a
wonderful example of what indomitable energy and in-
dustry can accomplish, even when laboring under dis-
advantages apparently the most insurmountable.

A complete Menagerie of LIVING ANIMALS is also
included in the American Museum, and at a convenient
period during the exhibition

MR. PIERCE

Will enter the dens of the Wild Beasts, and give his
classical illustrations of Hercules struggling with the
Nemean Lion; Daniel in the Lion's Den; Samson de-
stroying the Lion, &c.

One of the most interesting portions of the exhibi-
tion is formed by the display of a great collection of

WAX STATUARY,

Including figures of the size of Life, of all the Presi-
dents of the United States, and also of a great number
of noted characters, American and Foreign, all of which
are accurate likenesses, and appropriately costumed.—

In fact, the whole establishment is a vast repository of
**WONDERFUL OBJECTS OF NATURE
AND ART.**

The full particulars of which it would be impossible to
give within the limits of a newspaper advertisement,
and which have been brought together at an enormous
expenditure of means, forming the largest and most
novel travelling exhibition in this or any other country.

A fine Military Band will perform the most pop-
ular airs of the day, as the procession enters town, and
also during the hours of exhibition. The American
Museum and Menagerie will

On Monday and Tuesday, June 23d
and 24th,
FOR TWO DAYS ONLY.

Price of admission 25 cents.

Doors open from 2 to 5 P. M., and from 7½ to 10
in the evening.
THOM. TUFTS, Agent.
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Courtesy of the Conn. Historical Society.

AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF BARNUM'S "ASIATIC CARAVAN"

From the "Hartford Weekly Times" of May 24, 1851.

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CHAPTER XXIII

OTHER ENTERPRISES

Another Venture — “*Barnum’s Great Asiatic Caravan, Museum, and Menagerie*” — *Hunting Elephants* — *General Tom Thumb* — *Elephant Plowing in Connecticut* — *Curious Questions from All Quarters* — *The Public Interest in My Novel Farming* — *How Much an Elephant Can Really “Draw”* — *Commodore Vanderbilt* — *Dan Drew* — *Side Shows and Various Enterprises* — *Obsequies of Napoleon* — *The Crystal Palace* — *Campanologians* — *American Indians in London* — *Automaton Speaker* — *The Duke of Wellington* — *Attempt to Buy Shakespeare’s House* — *Dissolving Views* — *The Chinese Collection* — *Wonderful Scotch Boys* — *Solving the Mystery of Double Sight* — *The Bateman Children* — *Catherine Hayes* — *Iranistan on Fire* — *My Eldest Daughter’s Marriage* — *Benefits for the Bridgeport Library and the Mountain Grove Cemetery.*

WHILE I was managing the Lind concerts, in addition to the American Museum I had other business matters in operation which were more than enough to engross my entire attention and which, of course, I was compelled to commit to the hands of associates and agents.

In 1849 I had projected a great travelling museum and menagerie, and, as I had neither time nor inclination to manage such a concern, I induced Mr. Seth B. Howes,¹ justly celebrated as a showman, to join me, and take the sole charge. Mr. Sherwood E. Stratton, father of General Tom Thumb, was also admitted to partnership, the interest being in thirds.

In carrying out a portion of the plan, we chartered the ship “Regatta,” Captain Pratt, and despatched her, together with our agents, Messrs. June and Nutter, to Ceylon. The ship left New York in May, 1850, and was absent one year. Their

¹ Seth Howes was brother of “Nate” (Nathan A.) Howes of Southeast, New York. See also p. 137, *note* and p. 697, *note*. Barnum was not the only showman that enjoyed mansion-building. Seth Howes’ “castle” on Turk’s Hill, near Brewster, New York, is still (1926) pointed out. [Ed.]

mission was to procure, either by capture or purchase, twelve or more living elephants, besides such other wild animals as they could secure. In order to provide sufficient drink and provender for a cargo of these huge animals, we purchased a large quantity of hay in New York. Five hundred tons were left at the island of St. Helena, to be taken on the return trip of the ship, and staves and hoops of water-casks were also left at the same place.

As our agents were unable to purchase the required number of elephants, either in Colombo or Kandy, the principal towns of the island (Ceylon), they took one hundred and sixty native assistants, and plunged into the jungles, where, after many most exciting adventures, they succeeded in securing thirteen elephants of a suitable size for their purpose, with a female and her calf, or "baby" elephant, only six months old. In the course of the expedition, Messrs. Nutter and June killed large numbers of the huge beasts, and had numerous encounters of the most terrific description with the formidable animals, one of the most fearful of which took place near Anarajah Poora, while they were endeavoring, by the aid of the natives and trained elephants, to drive the wild herd of beasts into an Indian kraal.²

They arrived in New York in 1851 with ten of the elephants, and these, harnessed in pairs to a chariot, paraded up Broadway past the Irving House, while Jenny Lind was staying at that hotel, on the occasion of her second visit to New York. Messrs. Nutter and June also brought with the elephants a native who was competent to manage and control them. We added a caravan of wild animals and many museum curiosities, the entire outfit, including horses, vans, carriages, tent, etc., costing \$109,000, and commenced operations, with the presence and under the "patronage" of General Tom Thumb, who travelled

² The herd thus assembled is said to have been the first ever brought to America. Anarajah Poora is known to modern atlases as Anuradhapura. In advertisements of the "Asiatic Caravan," the elephants were depicted drawing what was said to be a faithful replica of the Car of Juggernaut. [Ed.]

nearly four years as one of the attractions of "Barnum's Great Asiatic Caravan, Museum, and Menagerie," returning us immense profits.

At the end of that time, after exhibiting in all sections of the country, we sold out the entire establishment — animals, cages, chariots, and paraphernalia, excepting one elephant, which I retained in my own possession two months for agricultural purposes. It occurred to me that if I could put an elephant to plowing for a while on my farm at Bridgeport, it would be a capital advertisement for the American Museum, which was then, and always during my proprietorship of that establishment, foremost in my thoughts.

So I sent him to Connecticut in charge of his keeper, whom I dressed in Oriental costume, and keeper and elephant were stationed on a six-acre lot which lay close beside the track of the New York and New Haven Railroad. The keeper was furnished with a time-table of the road, with special instructions to be busily engaged in his work whenever passenger trains from either way were passing through. Of course, the matter soon appeared in the papers and went the entire rounds of the press in this country and even in Europe, and it was everywhere announced that P. T. Barnum, "Proprietor of the celebrated American Museum in New York" — and here is where the advertisement came in — had introduced elephants upon his farm, to do his plowing and heavy draft work. Hundreds of people came many miles to witness the novel spectacle. Letters poured in upon me from the secretaries of hundreds of State and county agricultural societies throughout the Union, stating that the presidents and directors of such societies had requested them to propound to me a series of questions in regard to the new power I had put in operation on my farm. These questions were greatly diversified, but the "general run" of them were something like the following:

1. "Is the elephant a profitable agricultural animal?"
2. "How much can an elephant plow in a day?"
3. "How much can he draw?"

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

4. "How much does he eat?" — this question was invariably asked, and was a very important one.

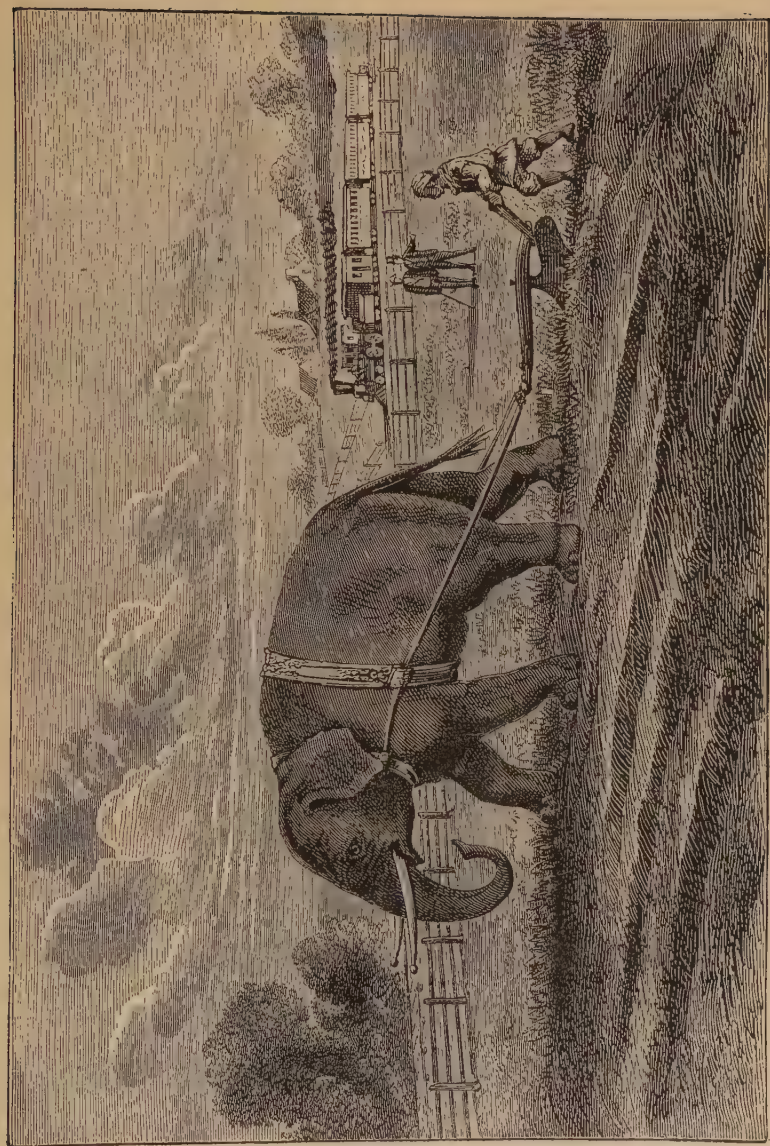
5. "Will elephants make themselves generally useful on a farm?" I suppose some of my inquirers thought the elephant would pick up chips, or even pins as they have been taught to do, and would rock the baby and do all the chores, including the occasional carrying of a trunk, other than his own, to the depot.

6. "What is the price of an elephant?"

7. "Where can elephants be purchased?"

Then would follow a score of other inquiries, such as, whether elephants were easily managed; if they would quarrel with cattle; if it was possible to breed them; how old calf elephants must be before they would earn their own living; and so on indefinitely. I began to be alarmed lest some one should buy an elephant, and so share the fate of the man who drew one in a lottery, and did not know what to do with him. I accordingly had a general letter printed, which I mailed to all my anxious inquirers. It was headed "strictly confidential," and I then stated, begging my correspondents "not to mention it," that to me the elephant was a valuable agricultural animal, because he was an excellent advertisement to my Museum; but that to other farmers he would prove very unprofitable for many reasons. In the first place, such an animal would cost from \$3,000 to \$10,000; in cold weather he could not work at all; in any weather he could not earn even half his living; he would eat up the value of his own head, trunk, and body every year; and I begged my correspondents not to do so foolish a thing as to undertake elephant farming.

Newspaper reporters came from far and near, and wrote glowing accounts of the elephantine performances. One of them, taking a political view of the matter, stated that the elephant's sagacity showed that he knew more than did any laborer on the farm, and yet, shameful to say, he was not allowed to vote. Another said that Barnum's elephant built all the stone wall on the farm; made all the rail fences; planted



From the 1869 "Struggles and Triumphs."

PLOWING WITH AN ELEPHANT IN CONNECTICUT

This beast was put at work on a six-acre lot near the New York and New Haven railway line. In Oriental costume and equipped with a time-table, his keeper kept him moving whenever a passenger-train went by.

corn with his trunk, and covered it with his foot; washed my windows and sprinkled the walks and lawns, by taking water from the fountain-basin with his trunk; carried all the children to school, and put them to bed at night, tucking them up with his trunk; fed the pigs; picked fruit from branches that could not otherwise be reached; turned the fanning mill and corn-sheller; drew the mowing machine, and turned and cocked the hay with his trunk; carried and brought my letters to and from the post-office (it was a male elephant); and did all the chores about the house, including milking the cows, and bringing in eggs. Pictures of Barnum's plowing elephant appeared in illustrated papers at home and abroad, and as the cars passed the scene of the performance, passengers' heads were out of every window, and among many and varied exclamations, I heard of one man's saying:

“ Well, I declare! That is certainly a real elephant and any man who has so many elephants that he can afford to work them on his farm, must have lots of wild animals and curious ‘critters’ in his Museum, and I am bound to go there the first thing after my arrival in New York.”

The six acres were plowed over at least sixty times before I thought the advertisement sufficiently circulated, and I then sold the elephant to Van Amburgh's Menagerie.

A substantial farmer friend of mine, Mr. Gideon Thompson, called at Iranistan during the elephant excitement and asked me to accompany him to the field to let him see “how the big animal worked.” I knew him to be a shrewd, sharp man and a good farmer, and I tried to excuse myself, as I did not wish to be too closely questioned. Indeed, for the same reason, I made it a point at all times to avoid being present when the plowing was going on. But the old farmer was a particular friend and he refused to take “no” for an answer; so I went with him “to see the elephant.”

Arriving at the field, Mr. Thompson said nothing, but stood with folded arms and sedately watched the elephant for at least fifteen minutes. Then he walked out on to the plowed

ground, and found it so mellow that he sank nearly up to his knees; for it had already been plowed over and over many times. As usual, several spectators were present. Mr. Thompson walked up to where I was standing, and, looking me squarely in the eyes, he asked with much earnestness:

"What is your object, sir, in bringing that great Asiatic animal on to a New England farm?"

"To plow," I replied very demurely.

"To plow!" said Thompson. "Don't talk to me about plowing! I have been out where he has plowed, and the ground is so soft I thought I should go through and come out in China. No, sir! You can't humbug me. You have got some other object in bringing that elephant up here; now what is it?"

"Don't you see for yourself that I am plowing with him?" I asked.

"Nonsense," said Thompson, "that would never pay; I have no doubt he eats more than he earns every day; you have some other purpose in view, I am sure you have."

"Perhaps he does not eat so much as you think," I replied; "and you see he draws nobly — in fact, I expect he will be just the animal by and by, to draw saw logs to mill, and do other heavy work."

But Uncle Gid was not to be put aside so easily, so he asked very sharply:

"How much does he eat in a day?"

"Oh," I replied carelessly, "not more than a quarter of a ton of hay and three or four bushels of oats."

"Exactly," said Thompson, his eyes glistening with delight; "that is just about what I expected. He can't draw so much as two pair of my oxen can, and he costs more than a dozen pair."

"You are mistaken, friend Thompson," I replied with much gravity; "that elephant is a powerful animal; he can draw more than forty yoke of oxen, and he pays me well for bringing him here."

"Forty yoke of oxen!" contemptuously replied the old

THE "COMMODORE" SURPRISED

farmer. "I don't want to tell you I doubt your word, but I would just like to know what he can draw."

"He can draw the attention of twenty millions of American citizens to Barnum's Museum," I replied.

"Oh, you can make him pay in that way, of course," responded the old farmer.

"None but a greenhorn could ever have expected he would pay in any other way," I replied.

The old man gave a hearty laugh, and said, "Well, I give it up. I have been a farmer thirty-five years, and I have only just discovered that an elephant is a very useful and profitable animal on a farm — provided the farmer also owns a museum."

In 1851 I became a part owner of the steamship "North America." Our intention in buying it was to run it to Ireland as a passenger and freight ship. The project was, however, abandoned, and Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt bought one half of the steamer,³ while the other half was owned by three persons, of whom I was one. The steamer was sent around Cape Horn to San Francisco, and was put into the Vanderbilt line.

After she had made several trips I called upon Mr. Vanderbilt, at his office, and introduced myself, as this was the first time we had met.

"Is it possible you are Barnum?" exclaimed the Commodore, in surprise. "Why, I expected to see a monster, part lion, part elephant, and a mixture of rhinoceros and tiger! Is it possible," he continued, "that you are the showman who has made so much noise in the world?"

I laughingly replied that I was, and added that if I, too, had been governed in my anticipation of his personal appearance by the fame he had achieved in his line, I should have expected to have been saluted by a steam whistle, and to have seen him dressed in a pea jacket, blowing off steam, and crying out, "All aboard that's going!"

³ The "Commodore" (1794-1877) was then in the steamboat phase of his career and had not yet entered on his railway activities. [Ed.]

"Instead of which," replied Mr. Vanderbilt, "I suppose you have come to ask me to 'walk up to the Captain's office and settle.'"

After this interchange of civilities, we talked about the success of the "North America" in having got safely around the Horn, and of the acceptable manner in which she was doing her duty on the Pacific side.

"We have received no statement of her earnings yet," said the Commodore, "but if you want money, give your receipt to our treasurer, and take some."

A few months subsequent to this, I sold out my share in the steamship to Mr. Daniel Drew.⁴ The day after closing with Mr. Drew, I discovered an error of several hundred dollars (a matter of interest on some portion of the purchase money, which had been overlooked). I called on Mr. Drew, and asked him to correct it, but could get no satisfaction. I then wrote him a threatening letter, but received no response. I was on the eve of suing him for the amount due me, when the news came that the steamship "North America" was lying at the bottom of the Pacific. It turned out that she was sunk several days before I sold out, and as the owners were mulcted in the sum of many thousands of dollars damages by their passengers, besides suffering a great loss in their steamship, I said no more to the millionaire Drew about the few hundreds which he had withheld from the showman.

Some reference to the various enterprises and "side shows" connected with, and disconnected from, my Museum, is necessary to show how industriously I have catered for the public's amusement, not only in America but abroad. When I was in Paris in 1844, in addition to the purchase of Robert Houdin's ingenious automaton writer, and many other costly curiosities for the Museum, I ordered, at an expense of \$3,000, a pano-

⁴ Known to "the Street" as "Uncle Dan'l." Drew (1788-1879), who in his early days had travelled for a while as "general utility" man with "Nate" Howes' circus, was later associated with Jay Gould and "Jim" Fisk in their Great Erie Railroad Show. [Ed.]

THE OBJECTION WITHDRAWN

ramic diorama of the obsequies of Napoleon. Every event of that grand pageant, from the embarkation of the body at St. Helena, to its entombment at the Hôtel des Invalides, amid the most gorgeous parade ever witnessed in France, was wonderfully depicted. This exhibition, after having had its day at the American Museum, was sold, and extensively and profitably exhibited elsewhere.

Having heard, while in London in 1844, of a company of "Campanologians, or Lancashire Bell Ringers," performing in Ireland, I induced them to meet me in Liverpool, and there engaged them for an American tour. One of my stipulations was that they should suffer their moustaches to grow, assume a picturesque dress, and be known as the "Swiss Bell Ringers." They at first objected, in the broad and almost unintelligible dialect of Lancashire, because, as they said, they spoke only the English language, and could not pass muster as Swiss people; but the objection was withdrawn when I assured them, that if they continued to speak in America as they had just spoken to me, they might safely claim to be Swiss, or any thing else, and no one would be any the wiser.

As in other cases, so in this, the deception as to birthplace was of small account, and did no injury. Those seven men were really admirable performers, and by means of their numerous bells, of various sizes, they produced the most delicious music. They attracted much attention in various parts of the United States, in Canada, and in Cuba.

As a compensation to England for the loss of the Bell Ringers, I despatched an agent to America for a party of Indians, including squaws. He proceeded to Iowa, and returned to London with a company of sixteen. They were exhibited by Mr. Catlin on our joint account, and were finally left in his sole charge.

On my first return visit to America from Europe, I engaged Mr. Faber, an elderly and ingenious German, who had constructed an automaton speaker. It was of life size, and when worked with keys similar to those of a piano, it really articu-

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

lated words and sentences with surprising distinctness. My agent exhibited it for several months in Egyptian Hall, London, and also in the provinces. This was a marvellous piece of mechanism, though for some unaccountable reason it did not prove a success. The Duke of Wellington visited it several times, and at first he thought that the "voice" proceeded from the exhibitor, whom he assumed to be a skilful ventriloquist. He was asked to touch the keys with his own fingers, and after some instruction in the method of operating, he was able to make the machine speak, not only in English but also in German, with which language the Duke seemed familiar. Thereafter, he entered his name on the exhibitor's autograph book, and certified that the "Automaton Speaker" was an extraordinary production of mechanical genius.⁵

During my first visit to England I obtained, verbally, through a friend, the refusal of the house in which Shakespeare was born, designing to remove it in sections to my Museum in New York; but the project leaked out, British pride was touched, and several English gentlemen interfered and purchased the premises for a Shakespearian Association. Had they slept a few days longer, I should have made a rare speculation, for I was subsequently assured that the British people, rather than suffer that house to be removed to America, would have bought me off with twenty thousand pounds. I did not hesitate to engage, or attempt to secure anything, at any expense, to please my patrons in the United States, and I made an effort to transfer Madame Tussaud's world-wide celebrated wax-work collection entire to New York. The papers were actually

⁵ In the 1873 edition of "Struggles and Triumphs" (p. 772), Barnum quotes from the New York "Tribune" of January 16, 1873, a paragraph credited to the Philadelphia "Press" to the effect that Barnum, on a visit to Philadelphia, had called on "Prof." Faber at the Girard House and signed a contract "for the services of Mr. and Mrs. Faber and their wonderful automaton talker during the tenting season of 1873." The "talker" is called "the most wonderful achievement of ingenuity that this age of new inventions has yet witnessed." . . . "It converses plainly and distinctly in all languages, giving every intonation of the human voice to extraordinary perfection." [Ed.]

VARIOUS EXHIBITIONS

drawn up for this engagement, but the enterprise finally fell through.⁶

The models of machinery exhibited in the Royal Polytechnic Institution in London, pleased me so well that I procured a duplicate; also duplicates of the "Dissolving Views," the Chromatrope and Physioscope, including many American scenes painted expressly to my order, at an aggregate cost of \$7,000. After they had been exhibited in my Museum, they were sold to itinerant showmen, and some of them were afterwards on exhibition in various parts of the United States.

In June, 1850, I added the celebrated Chinese Collection to the attractions of the American Museum. I also engaged the Chinese Family, consisting of two men, two "small-footed" women, and two children. My agent exhibited them in London during the World's Fair. It may be stated here, that I subsequently sent to London the celebrated artist De Lamano to paint a panorama of the Crystal Palace, in which the World's Fair was held, and Colonel John S. Dusolle,⁷ an able and accomplished editor, whom I sent with De Lamano, wrote an accompanying descriptive lecture. Like most panoramas, however, the exhibition proved a failure.

The giants whom I sent to America were not the greatest of my curiosities, though the dwarfs might have been the least. The "Scotch Boys" were interesting, not so much on account of their weight, as for the mysterious method by which one of them, though blindfolded, answered questions put by the other

⁶ "... On one occasion Niagara Falls and its environing estate and approaches were in the market, when a rumor got out to the effect that Barnum was about to buy all the property about the Falls and fence it in for show purposes. At another time a statement was made, equally emphatic, that he was to buy Shakspeare's house at Stratford-on-Avon, and bring it over to America, with a similar intent. Neither of these schemes was ever contemplated by him, as I happen to know, but he had no interest in contradicting the stories. He told me that he had too much reverence for those places to make a vulgar exhibition of them, which would be an inexcusable desecration; but he enjoyed the tumult made over the rumors, especially that in the English press." — Joel Benton in the "Century" for August 1902. See also p. 292. [Ed.]

⁷ "Du Solle" in the 1855 "Life." [Ed.]

respecting objects presented by persons who attended the surprising exhibition. The mystery, which was merely the result of patient practice, consisted wholly in the manner in which the question was propounded; in fact, the question invariably carried its own answer; for instance:

"What is this?" meant gold; "Now what is this?" silver; "Say what is this?" copper; "Tell me what this is," iron; "What is the shape?" long; "Now what shape?" round; "Say what shape," square; "Please say what this is," a watch; "Can you tell what is in this lady's hand?" a purse; "Now please say what this is?" a key; "Come now, what is this?" money; "How much?" a penny; "Now how much?" sixpence; "Say how much," a quarter of a dollar; "What color is this?" black; "Now what color is this?" red; "Say what color," green; and so on, *ad infinitum*. To such perfection was this brought that it was almost impossible to present any object that could not be quite closely described by the blindfolded boy. This is the key to all exhibitions of what is called "second sight."⁸

In 1850, the celebrated Bateman children acted for several weeks at the American Museum and in June of that year I sent them to London with their father and Mr. Le Grand Smith, where they played in the St. James' Theatre, and afterwards in the principal provincial theatres. The elder of these children, Miss Kate Bateman, subsequently attained the highest histrionic distinction in America and abroad, and reached the very head of her profession.⁹

In October, 1852, having stipulated with Mr. George A. Wells and Mr. Bushnell that they should share in the enterprise and take the entire charge, I engaged Miss Catherine Hayes

⁸ In connection with spoken codes formerly used in "mind-reading" performances, these questions may be compared with those given in Carrington's "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism" (pp. 296-297). [Ed.]

⁹ The "celebrated Bateman children" were Kate (b. 1842) and Ellen (b. 1845), daughters of Hezekiah Bateman, actor and manager. Kate became famous in England, where she played Lady Macbeth to the Macbeth of Henry Irving. Two other sisters, Virginia and Isabel, were also known to the London stage. [Ed.]

and Herr Begnis to give a series of sixty concerts in California, and the engagement was fulfilled to our entire satisfaction. Mr. Bushnell afterwards went to Australia with Miss Hayes and they were subsequently married. Both of them are dead.¹⁰

Before setting out for California, Miss Catherine Hayes, her mother, and sister spent several days at Iranistan and were present at the marriage of my eldest daughter, Caroline, to Mr. David W. Thompson. The wedding was to take place in the evening, and in the afternoon I was getting shaved in a barber-shop in Bridgeport, when Mr. Thompson drove up to the door in great haste and exclaimed:

“ Mr. Barnum, Iranistan is in flames! ”

I ran out half-shaved, with the lather on my face, jumped into his wagon and bade him drive home with all speed. I was greatly alarmed, for the house was full of visitors who had come from a distance to attend the wedding, and all the costly presents, dresses, refreshments, and everything prepared for a marriage celebration to which nearly a thousand guests had been invited, were already in my house. Mr. Thompson told me that he had seen the flames bursting from the roof and it seemed to me that there was little hope of saving the building.

My mind was distressed, not so much at the great pecuniary loss which the destruction of Iranistan would involve as at the possibility that some of my family or visitors would be killed or seriously injured in attempting to save something from the fire. Then I thought of the sore disappointment this calamity would cause to the young couple, as well as to those who were invited to the wedding. I saw that Mr. Thompson looked pale and anxious.

“ Never mind! ” said I. “ We can’t help these things; the house will probably be burned; but if no one is killed or injured,

¹⁰ Catherine Hayes (*c.* 1825–1861), of Irish birth and called “ The Swan of Erin,” had appeared with great success in Italy, Austria, and England. She made her New York début at Tripler Hall on September 23, 1851. After her engagement with Barnum, she undertook a professional tour that included India and Australia. Sims Reeves, the English tenor, termed her “ the sweetest Lucia he had ever sung with.” [Ed.]

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

you shall be married to-night, if we are obliged to perform the ceremony in the coach-house."

On our way, we overtook a fire-company and I implored them to "hurry up their machine." Arriving in sight of Iranistan we saw huge volumes of smoke rolling out from the roof and many men on the top of the house were passing buckets of water to pour upon the fire. Fortunately, several men had been engaged during the day in repairing the roof, and their ladders were against the house. By these means and with the assistance of the men employed upon my grounds, water was passed very rapidly and the flames were soon subdued without serious damage. The inmates of Iranistan were thoroughly frightened; Catherine Hayes and other visitors packed their trunks and had them carried out on the lawn; and the house came as near destruction as it well could, and escape.

CHAPTER XXIV

WORK AND PLAY

Alfred Bunn, of Drury Lane Theatre — Amusing Interview — Mr. Levy, of the London "Daily Telegraph" — Vacations at Home — My Presidency of the Fairfield County Agricultural Society — Exhibiting a Pick-pocket — Philosophy of Humbug — A Chapfallen Ticket-Seller — A Prompt Paymaster — Barnum in Boston — A Deluded Hack-Driver — Phillips' Fire Annihilator — Honorable Elisha Whittlesey — Trial of the Annihilator in New York — Pequonnock Bank of Bridgeport — The "Illustrated News" — The World's Fair in New York — My Presidency of the Association — Attempt to Excite Public Interest — Monster Jullien Concerts — Resignation of the Crystal Palace Presidency — Failure of the Concern.

IN the summer, I think, of 1853, I saw it announced in the newspapers that Mr. Alfred Bunn, the great ex-manager of Drury Lane Theatre, in London, had arrived in Boston.¹ Of course, I knew Mr. Bunn by reputation, not only from his managerial career, but from the fact that he made the first engagement with Jenny Lind to appear in London. This engagement, however, Mr. Lumley, of Her Majesty's Theatre, induced her to break, he standing a lawsuit with Mr. Bunn, and paying heavy damages. I had never met Mr. Bunn, but he took it for granted that I had seen him, for one day after his arrival in this country, a burly Englishman abruptly stepped into my private office in the Museum, and assuming a theatrical attitude, addressed me:

¹ Bunn (1796-1860) was even better known for his management of opera at Covent Garden, where, as producer of Balfe's leading works, he undertook to champion opera in English. As Balfe's librettist, he wrote the book of "The Maid of Artois," into which was introduced "The Light of Other Days," the most popular ballad of its day in England and a great favorite in America; and he also adapted the book of "The Bohemian Girl," melodies from which are still familiar. [Ed.]

"Barnum, do you remember me?"

I was confident I had never seen the man before, but it struck me at once that no Englishman I ever heard of would be likely to exhibit more presumption or assumption than the ex-manager of Drury Lane, and I jumped at the conclusion:

"Is not this Mr. Bunn?"

"Ah! Ah! my boy!" he exclaimed, slapping me familiarly on the back. "I thought you would remember me. Well, Barnum, how have you been since I last saw you?"

I replied in a manner that would humor his impression that we were old acquaintances, and during his two hours' visit we had much gossip about men and things in London. He called upon me several times, and it probably never entered into his mind that I could possibly have been in London two or three years without having made the personal acquaintance of so great a lion as Alfred Bunn.

I met Mr. Bunn again in 1858, in London, at a dinner party of a mutual friend, Mr. Levy, proprietor of the London "Daily Telegraph." Of course, Bunn and I were great chums and very old and intimate acquaintances. At the same dinner, I met several literary and dramatic gentlemen.

In 1851, 1852, and 1853, I spent much of my time at my beautiful home in Bridgeport, going very frequently to New York, to attend to matters in the Museum, but remaining in the city only a day or two at a time. I resigned the office of President of the Fairfield County Agricultural Society in 1853, but the members accepted my resignation only on condition that it should not go into effect until after the fair of 1854. During my administration, the society held six fairs and cattle-shows — four in Bridgeport and two in Stamford — and the interest in these gatherings increased from year to year.

Pickpockets are always present at these country fairs, and every year there were loud complaints of the depredations of these operators. In 1853 a man was caught in the act of taking a pocket-book from a country farmer, nor was this farmer the only one who had suffered in the same way. The scamp was



MME. JOSEPHINE CLOFULLIA, THE AMERICAN MUSEUM'S FAMOUS
BEARDED LADY

From an announcement in the "Illustrated News," New York, for June 18, 1853. The "Illustrated News," a weekly in which Barnum owned a one-third interest, was published for only one year — 1853.

AN EXTRA ATTRACTION

arrested, and proved to be a celebrated English pickpocket. As the Fair would close the next day, and as most persons had already visited it, we expected our receipts would be light.

Early in the morning the detected party was legally examined, plead guilty, and was bound over for trial. I obtained consent from the sheriff that the culprit should be put in the Fair room for the purpose of giving those who had been robbed an opportunity to identify him. For this purpose he was handcuffed, and placed in a conspicuous position, where of course he was "the observed of all observers." I then issued handbills, stating that as it was the last day of the Fair, the managers were happy to announce that they had secured extra attractions for the occasion, and would accordingly exhibit, safely handcuffed, and without extra charge, a live pickpocket, who had been caught in the act of robbing an honest farmer the day previous. Crowds of people rushed in "to see the show." Some good mothers brought their children ten miles for that purpose, and our treasury was materially benefited by the operation.

At the close of my presidency in 1854, I was requested to deliver the opening speech at our County Fair, which was held at Stamford. As I was not able to give agricultural advice, I delivered a portion of my lecture on the "Philosophy of Humbug." The next morning, as I was being shaved in the village barber's shop, which was at the time crowded with customers, the ticket-seller to the Fair came in.

"What kind of a house did you have last night?" asked one of the gentlemen in waiting.

"Oh, first-rate, of course. Barnum always draws a crowd," was the reply of the ticket-seller, to whom I was not known.

Most of the gentlemen present, however, knew me, and they found much difficulty in restraining their laughter.

"Did Barnum make a good speech?" I asked.

"I did not hear it. I was out in the ticket-office. I guess it was pretty good, for I never heard so much laughing as there was all through his speech. But it makes no difference whether

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

it was good or not," continued the ticket-seller, "the people will go to see Barnum."

"Barnum must be a curious chap," I remarked.

"Well, I guess he is up to all the dodges."

"Do you know him?" I asked.

"Not personally," he replied; "but I always get into the Museum for nothing. I know the doorkeeper, and he slips me in free."

"Barnum would not like that, probably, if he knew it," I remarked.

"But it happens he don't know it," replied the ticket-seller, in great glee.

"Barnum was on the cars the other day, on his way to Bridgeport," said I, "and I heard one of the passengers blowing him up terribly as a humbug. He was addressing Barnum at the time, but did not know him. Barnum joined in lustily, and indorsed everything the man said. When the passenger learned whom he had been addressing, I should think he must have felt rather flat."

"I should think so, too," said the ticket-seller.

This was too much, and we all indulged in a burst of laughter; still the ticket-seller suspected nothing. After I had left the shop, the barber told him who I was. I called in to the ticket-office on business several times during the day, but the poor ticket-seller kept his face turned from me, and appeared so chapfallen that I did not pretend to recognize him as the hero of the joke in the barber's shop.

This incident reminds me of numerous similar ones which have occurred at various times. On one occasion — it was in 1847 — I was on board the steamboat from New York to Bridgeport. As we approached the harbor of the latter city, a stranger desired me to point out "Barnum's house" from the upper deck. I did so, whereupon a bystander remarked, "I know all about that house, for I was engaged in painting there for several months while Barnum was in Europe." He then proceeded to say that it was the meanest and most ill-contrived

A LONG DRIVE

house he ever saw. "It will cost old Barnum a mint of money, and not be worth two cents after it is finished," he added.

"I suppose old Barnum don't pay very punctually," I remarked.

"Oh, yes, he pays punctually every Saturday night — there's no trouble about that; he has made half a million by exhibiting a little boy whom he took from Bridgeport, and whom we never considered any great shakes till Barnum took him and trained him."

Soon afterwards one of the passengers told him who I was, whereupon he secreted himself, and was not seen again while I remained on the boat.

On another occasion, I went to Boston by the Fall River route. Arriving before sunrise, I found but one carriage at the depot. I immediately engaged it, and giving the driver the check for my baggage, told him to take me directly to the Revere House, as I was in great haste, and enjoined him to take in no other passengers, and I would pay his demands. He promised compliance with my wishes, but soon afterwards appeared with a gentleman, two ladies, and several children, whom he crowded into the carriage with me, and placing their trunks on the baggage rack, started off. I thought there was no use in grumbling, and consoled myself with the reflection that the Revere House was not far away. He drove up one street and down another, for what seemed to me a very long time, but I was wedged in so closely that I could not see what route he was taking.

After half an hour's drive he halted, and I found we were at the Lowell Railway depot. Here my fellow-passengers alighted, and after a long delay the driver delivered their baggage, received his fare, and was about closing the carriage door preparatory to starting again. I was so thoroughly vexed at the shameful manner in which he had treated me, that I remarked:

"Perhaps you had better wait till the Lowell train arrives; you may possibly get another load of passengers. Of course my convenience is of no consequence. I suppose if you land me at

THE LIFE OF P. T. BARNUM

the Revere House any time this week, it will be as much as I have a right to expect."

"I beg your pardon," he replied, "but that was Barnum and his family. He was very anxious to get here in time for the first train, so I stuck him for \$2, and now I'll carry you to the Revere House free."

"What Barnum is it?" I asked.

"The Museum and Jenny Lind man," he replied.

The compliment and the shave both having been intended for me, I was of course mollified, and replied, "You are mistaken, my friend, *I* am Barnum."

"Coachee" was thunderstruck, and offered all sorts of apologies.

"A friend at the other depot told me that I had Mr. Barnum on board," said he, "and I really supposed he meant the other man. When I come to notice you, I perceive my mistake, but I hope you will forgive me. I have carried you frequently before, and hope you will give me your custom while you are in Boston. I never will make such a mistake again." I had to be satisfied.

Late in August, 1851, I was visited at Bridgeport by a gentleman who was interested in an English invention patented in this country, and known as Phillips' Fire Annihilator. He showed me a number of certificates from men of eminence and trustworthiness in England, setting forth the merits of the invention in the highest terms. The principal value of the machine seemed to consist in its power to extinguish flame, and thus prevent the spread of fire when it once broke out. Besides, the steam or vapor generated in the Annihilator was not prejudicial to human life. Now, as water has no effect whatever upon flame, it was obvious that the Annihilator would at the least prove a great *assistant* in extinguishing conflagrations, and that, especially in the incipient stage of a fire, it would extinguish it altogether, without damage to goods or other property, as is usually the case with water.

Hon. Elisha Whittlesey, First Comptroller of the United

A GUARANTY

States Treasury at Washington, was interested in the American patent, and the gentleman that called upon me desired that I should also take an interest in it. I had no disposition to engage in any speculation; but, believing this might prove a beneficent invention, and be the means of saving a vast amount of human life as well as property, I visited Washington City for the purpose of conferring with Mr. Whittlesey, Hon. J. W. Allen, and other parties interested.

I was there shown numerous certificates of fires having been extinguished by the machine in Great Britain, and property to the amount of many thousands of pounds saved. I also saw that Lord Brougham had proposed in Parliament that every Government vessel should be compelled to have the Fire Annihilator on board. Mr. Whittlesey expressed his belief in writing, that "if there is any reliance to be placed on human testimony, it is one of the greatest discoveries of this most extraordinary age." I fully agreed with him, and have never yet seen occasion to change that opinion.

I agreed to join in the enterprise. Mr. Whittlesey was elected president, and I was appointed secretary and general agent of the company. I opened the office of the company in New York, and sold and engaged machines and territory in a few months to the amount of \$180,000. I refused to receive more than a small portion of the purchase money until a public experiment had tested the powers of the machine, and I voluntarily delivered to every purchaser an agreement, signed by myself, in the following words:

"If the public test and demonstration are not perfectly successful, I will at any time when demanded, within ten days after the public trial, refund and pay back every shilling that has been paid into this office for machines or territory for the sale of the patent."

The public trial came off in Hamilton Square on the 18th December, 1851. It was an exceedingly cold and inclement day. Mr. Phillips, who conducted the experiment, was interfered with and knocked down by some rowdies who were opposed to

the invention, and the building was ignited and consumed after he had extinguished the previous fire. Subsequently to this unexpected and unjust opposition, I refunded every cent which I had received, sometimes against the wishes of those who had purchased, for they were willing to wait the result of further experiments; but I was utterly disgusted with the course of a large portion of the public upon a subject in which they were much more deeply interested than I was.

If I had been governed by the system of morals which is too prevalent in the trading community, I could have withheld the pledge which I gave to refund the money, and could thus have put many thousands of dollars into the treasury of the Annihilator Company. Being a mere showman, however, I was actuated by somewhat different principles, and chose voluntarily to make every man whole who had in any manner misapprehended the true merits of the invention. The arrangements of the Annihilator Company with Mr. Phillips, the inventor, predicated all payments which he was to receive on *bona fide* sales which we should actually make; therefore he really received nothing, and the entire losses of the American company, which were merely for advertising and the expense of trying experiments, hire of an office, etc., amounted to less than \$30,000, of which my portion was less than \$10,000.

I disposed of my interest in the concern to Horatio Allen, Esq., of the firm of Stillman, Allen & Co., at the Novelty Works.

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In the fall of 1852 a proposition was made by certain parties to commence the publication of an illustrated weekly newspaper in the city of New York. The field seemed to be open for such an enterprise, and I invested twenty thousand dollars in the concern, as special partner, in connection with two other gentlemen, who each contributed twenty thousand dollars, as general partners. Within a month after the publication of the first

THE CRYSTAL PALACE

number of the "Illustrated News," which was issued on the first day of January, 1853, our weekly circulation had reached seventy thousand. Numerous and almost insurmountable difficulties, for novices in the business, continued, however, to arise, and my partners becoming weary and disheartened with constant over-exertion, were anxious to wind up the enterprise at the end of the first year. The good-will and the engravings were sold to "Gleason's Pictorial," in Boston, and the concern was closed without loss.

In 1851, when the idea of opening a World's Fair in New York was first broached, I was waited upon by Mr. Riddell and the other originators of the scheme, and invited to join in getting it up. I declined, giving as a reason that such a project was, in my opinion, premature. I felt that it was following quite too closely upon its London prototype, and assured the projectors that I could see in it nothing but certain loss. The plan, however, was carried out, and a charter obtained from the New York Legislature. The building was erected on a plot of ground upon Reservoir Square, leased to the association by the city of New York for one dollar per annum. The location, being four miles distant from the City Hall, was enough of itself to kill the enterprise. The stock was readily taken up, however, and the Crystal Palace opened to the public in July, 1853. Many thousands of strangers were brought to New York, and however disastrous the enterprise may have proved to the stockholders, it is evident that the general prosperity of the city has been promoted far beyond the entire cost of the whole speculation.

In February, 1854, numerous stockholders applied to me to accept the presidency of the Crystal Palace, or, as it was termed, "The Association for the Exhibition of the Industry of all Nations." I utterly declined listening to such a project, as I felt confident that the novelty had passed away, and that it would be difficult to revive public interest in the affair.

Shortly afterwards, however, I was waited upon by numerous influential gentlemen, and strongly urged to allow my name

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to be used. I repeatedly objected to this, and at last consented, much against my own judgment. Having been elected one of the directors, I was by that body chosen president. I accepted the office conditionally, reserving the right to decline if I thought, upon investigation, that there was no vitality left in the institution. Upon examining the accounts said to exist against the Association, many were pronounced indefensible by those who I supposed knew the facts in the case, while various debts existing against the concern were not exhibited when called for, and I knew nothing of their existence until after I accepted the office of president. I finally accepted it, only because no suitable person could be found who was willing to devote his entire time and services to the enterprise, and because I was frequently urged by directors and stockholders to take hold of it for the benefit of the city at large, inasmuch as it was well settled that the Palace would be permanently closed early in April, 1854, if I did not take the helm.

These considerations moved me, and I entered upon my duties with all the vigor which I could command. To save it from bankruptcy, I advanced large sums of money for the payment of debts, and tried by every legitimate means to create an excitement and bring it into life. By extraneous efforts, such as the Re-inauguration, the Monster Concerts of Jullien,² the Celebration of Independence, etc., it was temporarily galvanized and gave several life-like kicks, generally without material results, except prostrating those who handled it too familiarly; but it was a corpse long before I touched it, and I found, after a thorough trial, that my first impression was correct, and that so far as my ability was concerned, "the dead could not be raised." I therefore resigned the presidency and the concern soon went into liquidation.³

² Louis Antoine Jullien (1812-1860), a popular French conductor of lighter music.

³ In the 1855 "Life," Barnum wrote: "I never labored so hard, night and day, during three months, as I did while President of the Crystal Palace, and finding that its creditors seemed to look upon me as the debtor, and expected me to cancel all the obligations instead of the 'Association,' I resigned in July." Horace

St. Paul's
Chapel

Trinity
Church

The Museum



From a steel engraving in "Meyer's Universum."

THE VICINITY OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM (1853)

Astor House

PATENT RIGHTS

In 1854, my esteemed friend, Reverend Moses Ballou, wrote, and Redfield, of New York, published a volume entitled "The Divine Character Vindicated," in which he reviewed some of the principal features of a work by the Rev. E. Beecher, brother of Henry Ward Beecher, "The Conflict of Ages; or, the Great Debate on the Moral Relations of God and Man." The dedication in Rev. Mr. Ballou's volume was as follows:

TO P. T. BARNUM, ESQ., IRANISTAN.

My Dear B.:—I am more deeply indebted to you for personal favors than to any other living man, and I feel that it is but a poor acknowledgment to beg your acceptance of this volume. Still, I know that you will value it somewhat, not only for the sake of our personal friendship, but because it is an advocate of that interpretation of Christianity of which you have ever been a most generous and devoted patron. With renewed assurances of my best regards,

I am, yours, always,

Bridgeport, January 22, 1854.

M. B.

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There is neither limit nor end to the plans which have been, and continually are submitted to me for money-making. Most of them are as wild and unfeasible as a railroad to the moon, while perhaps once in a thousand times something reasonable is suggested.

Hundreds of patent rights have been offered me (the owners of which scarcely ever intimate a profit of less than \$100,000, and frequently from \$500,000 to \$1,000,000) on the plan of dividing the profits, provided I furnish the means to bring the patent before the public.

Greeley was a member of the board of directors; and when complimented by President Barnum for punctuality at board-meetings, replied: "Some persons never have time to meet engagements, but I always have plenty of time." [Ed.]

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Thousands of acres of wild lands have been placed at my disposal, free of charge, provided I would lend my name to help sell as much more of the same sort.

Mining and other speculative stocks without number have been offered me on the same conditions, the plan in such cases being to procure some person of known or supposed substance, to be used as a "stool pigeon" to swindle the public.

I hope it is needless to say that I never did, and never will, lend myself to any operation of that sort.

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Applicants lately, who have "grand speculations" in view, usually commence in about this manner: "Mr. Barnum, I know you are always ready to join in any thing that will make money on a large scale. Now, I have a project by which \$200,000 can be made in a year. Of course, if I divulge it to you, I want you to pledge your honor to take no advantage of it, if you do not join me in the speculation."

To which I generally reply: "You are much mistaken in supposing that I am so ready or anxious to make money. On the contrary, there is but one thing in the world that I desire—that is, tranquillity. I am quite certain your project will not give me that, for you probably would not have called upon me if you did not wish to draw upon my brains or my purse—very likely on both. Now, of the first, I have none to spare. Of the second, what I have is invested, and I have no desire to disturb it."

"Oh, no, my project will require little of your attention, and no capital to speak of, compared to the immense profit which is sure to ensue. It must be done by a stock company."

"Well, my friend, before telling me what your plan is, permit me to make one remark. If you should propose to get up a stock company for converting paving stones into diamonds, with a prospect of my making a million a year, I would not join you. If your speculation therefore is not something better than

MORE THAN HALF RIGHT

that, you need not divulge it, for I certainly should not engage in it."

This generally relieves me from hearing what the plan is, but not always — for some enthusiasts will still believe they have something that will "tempt me," and insist on explaining it.

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One man came from Nashville, Tenn., to induce me to join him in getting up a cemetery in that town on speculation. "I should not think the people would die fast enough there to make it an object," I replied.

"Oh," he responded, "the money is not to be made out of the necessities of the dead, but from the pride of the living."

I believed he was more than half right, but "respectfully declined."

Another person had a magnificent plan for carrying passengers by the overland route to California on camels. I told him that I thought asses were better than camels, but I should not be one of them.⁴

⁴ In the 1855 volume, Barnum gives this letter from "Professor" Gardner, "the celebrated New England soap man," who sent with the letter "a dozen cakes of his soap":

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Oct. 20th, 1853.

BARNUM: — I never saw you, nor you me, yet we are not strangers. You have soaped the community, and so have I. You are rich, I am not. I have a plan to add half a million to your wealth, and many laurels to your brow. I manufacture by far the best soap ever known, as a million of gentlemen, and three millions of God's greatest work, beautiful women, will testify. I send you a sample to prove the truth of my words. Try it, and when you find that I state FACTS, put \$10,000 in the soap business, join me as an equal partner, and we will thoroughly soap the American Continent in three years, at a profit of a million dollars.

By doing this, sir, you will erect a monument in the hearts of the people worthy of your name! You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have conferred a boon upon your countrymen. Cleanliness is next to godliness. You, sir, can aid in cleaning and purifying at least ten millions of your dirty fellow-citizens. It is a duty you owe to them and yourself. Look at my portrait on the soap wrapper, and you will see the face of an honest man. Send me your check next week for \$5000, and the week after for \$5000 more. This additional capital will enable me to supply the demand for my unrivalled soap, and I will send you quarterly returns

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of profits. Come, old fellow, fork over, and no grumbling! You will thus become a public benefactor, and unwashed millions shall chant your name in praise.

My soap makes soft hands, and cures soft heads. It removes paint and grease, is unsurpassed for shaving, cures chaps on hands or face, and is death on foul teeth. It cures eruptions to a charm. I have no doubt that a sufficient quantity, properly applied, would cure the eruption of Vesuvius.

Address me immediately at Providence, Rhode Island.

Yours, etc.,

PROFESSOR GARDNER,

Known as the New England Soap Man.

The "old fellow," though he did not "fork over," did try the "Professor's" soap — "and found it excellent." [Ed.]



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